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## Hoptoad Habitats: Cool Pools Need Protection

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**Summary:** This activity encourages students to take action to conserve valuable amphibian habitat such as vernal pools, through creative expression and local action.

**Objective:** Students will create signs to raise awareness and encourage protection of the vernal pool they visited, and/or other vernal pools in the community.

**Grades:** 3-5

**Subject:** art, language

**Skills:** art, communication, design, woodworking

**Materials:** Plywood, paper, laminator, paints or permanent markers, screws/nails, disposable cameras (optional)

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### Overview

Now that students appreciate the importance and uniqueness of vernal pools, they may wish to protect them and share what they have learned. In this activity, students will create signs geared towards protecting vernal pool habitats. They may be placed at vernal pools or other important amphibian breeding grounds throughout the area. The district's wood shop or PTA could be consulted for assistance with the materials and creation of the signs.

### Activity

1. Students could choose what method they wish to make their sign to allow for personal expression, as well as use of any talents. For instance, most children may wish to draw and color on paper, which the teacher will then heavily laminate, and can be glued or nailed to the wooden sign. Other students may prefer to wood burn at home or in class (if resources allow), or paint onto the wooden sign itself. Since the signs should actually be placed near pools, they should be as durable as possible. Once the artwork is complete, the sign will be secured to a post.
2. Ideas for the wording include, but are not limited to:  
"Salamander Breeding Pond: Please Use Caution"  
"Vernal Pool Habitat: Please Do Not Litter"  
"Protect our Vernal Pools"



“Home for Frogs, Toads, and Salamanders: Tread Lightly”

3. Students can decide where they want their sign to be posted as they are working on them, and should even search for other vernal pools in their neighborhood. If they cannot find any, other students may have suggestions.
4. Students should be asked to report back on where they posted their sign. They could be take turns using a disposable camera for pictures, which would then be posted on a board.