

Chapter VIII How to Adopt a Wetland

You may be wondering how you and your class can become a part of EPA's *Adopt-a-Wetland Program*. This program has two components:

- 1) To recognize the wetland protection efforts of schools across New England, EPA will send one *Adopt-a-Wetland Certificate* to every class that qualifies. This certificate recognizes the dedication and hard work put forth by students to improve their environment, and also acknowledges that their efforts are important and appreciated by environmental protection professionals.
- 2) EPA Region I is also interested in helping teachers share their classroom and field experiences with each other. Please summarize any ideas or experiences you would like to share with other teachers in your certificate application. These "wetland teaching tips" will be compiled for a forthcoming wetland educator newsletter to be distributed to those participating in the *Adopt-A-Wetland Program*.

How can your class qualify for an Adopt-A-Wetland Certificate?

While EPA wants to encourage all manner of wetland studies, the Agency is especially interested in creating an incentive for students to progress from study to action: to have students put what they have learned into practice. Thus, students need to demonstrate to EPA that they have conducted at least one stewardship-oriented activity that helps to protect or improve the quality of a local wetland. The size and location of the wetland does not matter, and the magnitude of the action itself is not critical. What *is* important is that students translate classroom learning into community action by protecting an environment in their backyard. Your class can qualify for an *Adopt-A-Wetland Certificate* by performing one or more of the following:

- conducting a wetlands education campaign in the school and/or community, e.g., producing a field guide;
- constructing "wetlands crossing" signs along roadways or bridges;
- certifying vernal pools;
- cleaning up a wetland;
- patrolling the wetland on a routine basis to look for evidence of dumping and other illegal activities; or
- any other activity that protects or improves the quality of a nearby wetland.

Because this program is administered through EPA's New England regional office, **certificates will only be available for classes in the six New England states** (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont). If you live outside this area, contact the EPA office in your region to determine if similar education programs are offered. Addresses and phone numbers for the EPA regional offices are listed in the *Appendix*.

What do you need to do next?

Fill out the certificate application and evaluation form. Describe what your class has done to protect a local wetland. If possible, include information that documents your efforts – a letter from your conservation commission, principal or mayor and newsclips, photos, or sections from your field guide. Send this information to:

EPA Region I
Wetland Protection Section
JFK Federal Building
Boston, MA 02203
ATTN: *Adopt-A-Wetland Program*

In order to make improvements to the guidebook in future editions, we would appreciate your feedback on the effectiveness of both the guide and videos. Completing and returning the evaluation form with your certificate application will automatically place you on the *Adopt-A-Wetland* mailing list.

How long will it take to receive a Certificate?

Review of your application and distribution of a certificate could take up to four weeks, depending on the number of applications received. If you have any questions please contact the EPA Region I Wetland Protection Section at (617) 565-4868.

Adopt-A-Wetland Certificate Application

Teacher's name _____

School address _____

Phone number _____ Grade level _____

Location of your wetland (town & state) _____

Approximate size of wetland (in acres) _____

Ownership information (e.g., private, state park, land trust) _____

Summary of stewardship project(s). (Please feel free to include additional pages) _____

How did you first learn about the *Adopt-A-Wetland Program*? _____

Do you have any ideas or successful wetland activities that you would like to share with other teachers? _____

Did you experience any obstacles to studying wetlands (in or outside the classroom) that you'd like to mention?

Please send this form to:

EPA Region I • Wetland Protection Section • JFK Federal Building
Boston, MA 02203 • Attn: Adopt-A-Wetland Program

