



Karen Pike/Burlington Free Press

Environmental agents with the Vermont Agency of Transportation install a protective fence along Route 2, just south of the Sandbar Wildlife Management Area near Milton to help keep frogs from jumping into the road and getting squashed.

AOT hopes fence will keep frogs hopping

ASSOCIATED PRESS

MILTON — A band of frog sympathizers put up a fence Wednesday in the hopes of saving thousands of frogs that get squashed on Route 2 in the Sandbar Wildlife Management Area every summer.

Scientists, Agency of Transportation workers, and volunteers erected about a thousand feet of black fabric fence on each side of the busy

road.

Any day now, millions of polliwogs in the Lake Champlain marshes along the state highway sprout legs, climb out of the water and take to the road.

Because approximately 9,500 cars and trucks a day use the road too, thousands of frogs get squashed after wandering onto the blacktop.

In some parts of July, when the ex-tadpoles first exercise their new legs, a mile-long stretch of the asphalt literally glistens with the innards of former frogs.

Biologists hope the fence, mounded at the base with tufts of sod, will keep frogs born to

the south of the road to the south, and frogs born to the north, in the north.

"It's a totally unnecessary mortality," said Nelson Hoffman, environmental coordinator for the AOT, "and this is a relatively cheap solution."

The agency paid \$500 for the silt fence.

Workers from the AOT and the Agency of Natural Resources will monitor the stretch through the summer.

They will count squashed frogs along the thousand feet of fenced road, and compare that with the number of flattened frogs on the 4,000 or so feet of road that remains accessible.

The fences will be removed in September. Mark Ferguson, a zoologist with the Department of Fish and Wildlife, said the decision on whether the fences go back next year depends on what the numbers from this summer show.

He doesn't expect the barriers to adversely affect the plentiful leopard frog population, because there appears to be no biological or migratory reason for the young frogs to cross U.S. 2.

"I don't think there's any great urge," confirmed Chris Slesar, an environmental specialist with the Agency of Transportation. "It's just random hopping."

Sorrell

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He also pointed out the ex-

have been encouraged to intervene.

Sorrell was appointed attor-

Middlebury attorney Cindy Hill, a Progressive, is the only major party