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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

amphibianfoundation
PROTECTING AMPHIBIANS AND THEIR HABITATS

NEW AMPHIBIAN FOUNDATION AIMS TO SAVE FROGS AND SALAMANDERS

(Atlanta, Ga.) Dec. 10, 2016—A team of concerned scientists have formed a non-profit organization called the Amphibian Foundation, Inc. dedicated to connecting individuals, communities and organizations in order to create and implement lasting solutions to the global amphibian extinction crisis. Led by biologist Mark Mandica, former Amphibian Conservation Coordinator for the Atlanta Botanical Gardens, the Amphibian Foundation aims to conserve amphibians and their ecosystems and to protect one of the most sensitive and diverse groups of animals for the benefit of wildlife biodiversity, humanity, and the environment. The Amphibian Foundation will be headquartered at the Blue Heron Nature Preserve in Buckhead.

Current research estimates that 38 percent of the world's amphibian populations are in decline, or already extinct. The Amphibian Foundation will bring together top researchers in the field of amphibian biology, conservation, and applied science to address the causes of global amphibian decline. The foundation will also develop conservation programs to reverse declines at the species level.

Working with federal agencies such as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the U.S. Geologic Survey (USGS,) the Amphibian Foundation is the only agency authorized to work with certain highly sensitive amphibians which are at imminent risk of extinction. "We are thrilled to be partnering with such a talented, dedicated and professional group, and are looking forward to working with the Amphibian Foundation toward making some real progress for saving amphibians," reported Harold Mitchell, Ecologist with USFWS.

The Foundation is equipped with two state-of-the-art research labs, plus the 'metamorphosis meadow,' a private, outdoor area that holds dozens of mesocosms (outdoor systems that allow examination of the natural environment under controlled conditions) where native U.S. species will be bred. Once offspring are produced at the Foundation, they will be experimentally released back into protected habitat. The mesocosms will also serve as a resource for assisted-

metamorphosis projects and ‘head-starting’ endangered species past the sensitive larval stage, when amphibians are particularly vulnerable to predation.

The Amphibian Foundation has a strong educational component to their mission as well, particularly with elementary through high-school age students. “It’s so much harder to simply find a frog outside than it was when I was a child,” says Mark Mandica, Executive Director and Founder of the Amphibian Foundation. “I am excited to share my passion and enthusiasm for amphibians with children, and I believe that, above all, children are the greatest weapon we have against further amphibian declines.”

For more information, visit www.amphibianfoundation.org.

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A Dropbox link with high res versions of the images can be viewed here:
<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/dquhke8eklciosn/AACuVfs7kftZVhrLLizYdlLYa?dl=0>

Photo captions:

Photo 1: Mark Mandica, founder of the Amphibian Foundation, holds a Scarlet King Snake found during a salamander survey at Ft. Stewart, near Hinesville, Ga.





Photo 2: The Amphibian Foundation is dedicated to connecting individuals, communities and organizations in order to create and implement lasting solutions to the global amphibian extinction crisis. Pictured here is a critically endangered Lemur Leaf Frog, *Agalychnis lemur*.