

House Sponsor(s): Nneka Sobers (Environmental Coalition)

Senate Sponsor(s): Katie Shepard; Mario Ichaso (College of Business); Gloria Trivitt (College of Science)

Resolution S12-R?: A resolution in support of protecting Virginia Tech's Stadium Woods

Regarding the proposal to destroy a portion of Stadium Woods in order to construct an indoor athletic training facility for the football, soccer, and lacrosse teams:

WHEREAS, Virginia Tech has publicly committed itself to value sustainability, and to engage in sound environmental stewardship; and

WHEREAS, the first point under Virginia Tech's Climate Action and Campus Sustainability Plan is "Virginia Tech will be a leader in campus sustainability"; and

WHEREAS, Virginia Tech has been designated as a Tree Campus USA; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Blacksburg, of which Virginia Tech is a part, has been designated as a Tree City USA, and has vigorously promoted environmental sustainability; and

WHEREAS, the Stadium Woods are the only woodland on central campus that possesses characteristics of old-growth forest, essentially comprising a self-contained forest ecosystem, populated by over fifty trees measuring greater than three feet in diameter, many of which are over 300 years of age, and is seasonally inhabited by over 60 species of birds, many of which are neo-tropical migrants, not found in urbanized landscapes; and

WHEREAS, the 2009 Virginia Tech Master Plan Amendment designates the Stadium Woods as an "environmental greenway," thus as "a significant reservation of lands, waterways, tree stands, and cultural landmarks for future generations"; and

WHEREAS, the Stadium Woods are used by faculty to conduct both classes and research, and also are used for environmental education for visiting K-12 students and adult learners; and

WHEREAS, the Stadium Woods are used for outdoor recreation and leisure by students, faculty, staff, visitors, and nearby residents; and

WHEREAS, the Stadium Woods enhance the aesthetics and character of the Lane Stadium area; and

WHEREAS, the Stadium Woods are a living reminder of the natural history of campus and the region; and

WHEREAS, the Stadium Woods are important for community storm water mitigation through canopy interception and forest soil detention, and provide soil erosion control through vegetative and litter cover and plant root systems; and

WHEREAS, the Stadium Woods are a habitat for an assortment of flora and fauna that are dependent on old-growth forest; and

WHEREAS, the Roanoke Times, a leading and well-respected newspaper of Southwest Virginia, endorsed protecting Stadium Woods; and

WHEREAS the Arboretum Committee of Virginia Tech, whose purpose is to advocate for wise stewardship of campus trees and forests and to provide technical advice to the administration of the University concerning matters related to these natural resources, strongly opposes this project; and

WHEREAS the Faculty Senate of Virginia Tech endorsed a similar resolution calling on the protection of Stadium Woods; and

WHEREAS, the long-term utility and health of Stadium Woods will be negatively impacted by this building project, and that the unique character and benefits of the Stadium Woods will be irreparably harmed by the proposed building project;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Student Government Association of Virginia Tech asks that the Office of the President and the Athletic Department of Virginia Tech stop all plans to develop Stadium Woods.

ADDITIONALLY, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Student Government Association of Virginia Tech asks that the Office of the President begin the process to designate Stadium Woods as a permanently protected place.

ADDITIONALLY, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Student Government Association of Virginia Tech supports the general idea of the proposed athletic facility, and encourages the Office of the President and the Athletic Department of Virginia Tech to relocate it to an area that is less environmentally and ecologically sensitive while still serving the needs of the Athletics Department.