

**Resolution of the University of South Florida Faculty Senate in Support of Maintaining the ca 500-acre plot of land designated the USF Forest Preserve as a Conservation Area, Wildlife Corridor, Natural Classroom and Research Site.**

Whereas, the USF Forest Preserve is dominated by wetlands, which are protected by the State of Florida;

Whereas, the USF Forest Preserve contains ecologically important sandhill habitat, which is severely threatened both locally and nationally;

Whereas, the USF Forest Preserve is home to several endangered and threatened animal and plant species;

Whereas, the USF Forest Preserve contains several known Native American archaeological sites with human burials and other cultural heritage protected by the State of Florida;

Whereas, the USF Forest Preserve provides critical ecological functions such as purification of water entering the Hillsborough River (a State-designated Outstanding Florida Water), and serves as a carbon sink that counteracts global warming; and is also an integral component of a wildlife corridor that connects with the Green Swamp (the headwaters of the Hillsborough River);

Whereas, the intact network of numerous characteristic Florida ecosystem types across the Forest Preserve landscape gives rise to the Preserve's natural, cultural, teaching, and research values;

Whereas, the USF Forest Preserve is an educational asset used by many USF academic departments, schools and programs including Anthropology, Integrative Biology, Geography, Geology, and Environmental Science and Policy as a natural classroom;

Whereas, many USF academic units including Anthropology, Civil & Environmental Engineering, Integrative Biology, Geography, Geology, and Environmental Science and Policy rely on the USF Forest Preserve for faculty and student research

Whereas, development of this Preserve would destroy its beneficial uses for a sustainable environment, as well as its utility as a natural classroom and research site for USF students and faculty;

**Therefore, *be it resolved,***

That the Faculty of the University of South Florida recognizes the USF Forest Preserve as intrinsically valuable, that it is a core learning facility fostering teaching and research, that it should be responsibly managed as an intact landscape to continue preserving cultural heritage and supporting natural ecological and hydrological function, and as an irreplaceable educational resource that should be available to USF students and faculty in perpetuity. As such, the Faculty of the University of South Florida are vehemently opposed to any development or destruction of the Forest Preserve, particularly any action that may result in a deleterious impact to the site as a historical, cultural, and educational asset.