



United Faculty of Florida  
University of South Florida Chapter  
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## **USF Faculty Union Supports Preserving the USF Forest Preserve**

**TAMPA, Fla. ---** The USF faculty union resolved against “any attempt to dispose of or compromise the USF Forest Preserve,” which is a square mile of relative wilderness northwest of the USF Tampa Campus, and is used for research and teaching. The resolution was made in response to the USF Administration’s recent Request for Information (RFI) calling for proposals for development or similar purposes, and to the USF Senate’s May 19 resolution that “...the Faculty of the University of South Florida are vehemently opposed to any development or destruction of the Forest Preserve...”

“We are deeply disappointed by the Administration’s call for proposals to develop this site,” said the union’s chapter president, Arthur Shapiro. “Colleges and universities possess many irreplaceable resources for scholarship and maintenance, with the expectation that those resources will be there for future generations.”

The union, the United Faculty of Florida, has a chapter at every public university in Florida, including USF, and the USF Chapter of the union represents over 1,600 USF faculty when bargaining and enforcing a contract with the USF Board of Trustees. “This union is concerned about the terms and conditions of employment of the faculty and professionals we represent,” said the chapter’s Chief Negotiator, Robert Welker. “If this resource is destroyed or degraded, that will undermine the ability of some of our faculty to do their jobs.”

“The USF Forest Preserve is a critical resource for several science programs,” said chapter Vice President Steve Lang. “Students do work there in archeology, biology, ecology, and other sciences, and it provides them with a valuable educational experience in the field.” Chapter Secretary Greg McColm added that, “The Preserve is a critical site for significant scholarship central to the university’s goals of excellence in water and environmental research.”

Chapter Treasurer Sonia Wohlmuth said that, “Whatever short term financial gain USF gets from developing the Preserve would be outweighed by the long-term loss.” And Chapter Grievance Chair Karin Braunsberger warned that, “This proposal could make donors worry that USF may not be the best steward of its resources.”

The full statement of the USF Chapter of the United Faculty of Florida is as follows:

*Whereas, an RFI on the plot of land designated as the USF Forest Preserve has been posted, and*

*Whereas, the USF Faculty Senate observed that the USF Forest Preserve serves critical environmental functions, and*

*Whereas, the USF Faculty Senate observed that the USF Forest Preserve is a critical teaching and research resource, and*

*Whereas, the USF Forest Preserve is a major resource to faculty in at least seven departments for both teaching and research, and is thus important to those faculty for carrying out their assigned scholarly duties, and*

*Whereas, the USF Forest Preserve is a major resource to graduate students both for completion of their dissertation and thesis work and for their instructional duties,*

*Therefore, be it resolved that the United Faculty of Florida declares the USF Forest Preserve to be of intrinsic value, both to the mission of the University of South Florida, and to the faculty and student employees within the UFF USF Bargaining Unit, and as such it should be regarded as being held in trust by the USF Board of Trustees, to be maintained in perpetuity as a resource for the University, and*

*Therefore, the United Faculty of Florida opposes any attempt to dispose of or compromise the USF Forest Preserve.*