

Resolution 2020-2021E
Resolution to Approve New Major, Ecological Restoration, in Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science

Recommended by the Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies

First Reading:

January 25, 2021

Faculty Senate waived right to comment:

January 29, 2021

Staff Senate:

Graduate Student Assembly:

Student Government Association:

Second Reading:

February 8, 2021

Approved by University Council:

Approved by the President:

First Effective Date to Declare Major: Fall 2021

First Effective Date to Graduate: Spring 2022

WHEREAS, Ecological Restoration is the process of guiding the recovery of degraded or destroyed ecosystems like those often found in agricultural, urban, and mined landscapes and associated waters; and

WHEREAS, globally, millions of square kilometers of damaged landscapes are slated for restoration in the coming decade and the United Nations has designated 2021-2030 as the “Decade of Ecosystem Restoration”; and

WHEREAS, governments and corporations are increasingly hiring Restoration Ecologists to meet regulatory obligations and the expectations of investors; and

WHEREAS, to be successful in the restoration economy, graduates will need intensive training in the science and practice of restoration with disciplinary knowledge in plant, water, and soil sciences, as well as interdisciplinary knowledge of economics, policy, and human dimensions; and

WHEREAS, the School of Plant and Environmental Sciences has strengths in plant science, horticulture, and soil science to establish a new Major in Ecological Restoration and train students to restore and enhance ecosystems with emphasis on mined lands, wetlands, and retired agricultural lands; and

WHEREAS, the School of Plant and Environmental Sciences is committed to providing coursework and experiential learning fitting the VT-shaped curriculum to produce graduates with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of highly-qualified Restoration Ecologists to fill employment vacancies; and

WHEREAS, no new resources will be required to initiate the Major in Ecological Restoration after the School of Plant and Environmental Sciences recently filled a tenure-track position who will contribute to the new major; and

WHEREAS, letters of support have been received from all departments whose courses would be included in the proposed Major in Ecological Restoration; and

WHEREAS, the new Major in Ecological Restoration is anticipated to attract 20-30 additional students per year interested in pursuing careers in this field to Virginia Tech.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Major in Ecological Restoration under the Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science within the School of Plant and Environmental Sciences be approved effective Fall 2021 and the proposal forwarded through University governance to the President for approval.