Faculty Group Demands Bascom Woods Be a Park

The shaded area above would be dedicated in perpetuity as John Muir Park, and would bar erection of campus buildings in the area, as a proposal to be discussed Monday by the University of Wisconsin faculty. An advisory committee on wooded areas has proposed the park.

Important faculty opposition to the use of Bascom Hill woods as a site for future U. W. buildings will be submitted to the special faculty meeting Monday called to discuss the matter.

The committee pointed out that the faculty could also include part of the area to the left of the shaded area, which would effectively bar erection of a proposed classroom north of the Carillon Tower.

The resolution would still permit the U. S. Regents to erect a proposed Sociology-Economics Building, north of the Carillon Tower, but suggests that the faculty might want to include that area in the proposed park.

Approval of the resolution Monday would be an important obstacle to a Campus Planning Commission's recommendation that the Sociology-Economics Building be erected in the north end of the wooded area.

Designation of the area as a park "would act as a guide to the Campus Planning Commission and as a reassurance to those who value the unusual educational opportunities provided by the area," the committee said.

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Professor Group Demands Woods Become a Park

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wooded areas and those who cherish the beauty of the campus," the advisory committee stated.

"It is, of course, clear that the faculty could recommend that the area north of the Carroll Tower, which is the Campus Planning Council's recommendation be used for the Sociology-Anthropology-Economics building and other buildings, be added to the proposed John Muir Park instead of being retained for what is called, the committee report added.

This action is in addition to a strongly worded protest signed by 11 prominent faculty members which was issued Dec. 18.

Members of the advisory committee, in addition to Prof. Curtis, are Prof. D. M. Angell, Prof. Grant Cotton, Prof. A. D. Hasler and Prof. G. W. Langemeier.

Pointing out that Bascom Woods is indispensable as an outdoor laboratory, the advisory committee report said that to permit it to be relegated to a "park area in part would destroy one of our great and irreplaceable assets possessed by few universities."

The committee report follows in full:

"The wooded areas on the campus are an essential part of the biological teaching program of the University. The specific worth of Bascom Woods for this purpose has been determined many times, most recently in the 1952 statement of the Biological Division. Other biologically important natural areas on the campus were listed by the Sensitvite Areas Committee of the Biological Division in August, 1955. The present report is a restatement of the biologist's needs in terms of specific wooded or potentially wooded areas, for use in the construction of a master plan for the campus. It is hoped that such needs will be given the recognition they deserve and that the areas involved will be suitably designed on the master plan for such a way that they will be permanently dedicated to biology and not considered as 'open areas' available for buildings, parking lots or other structures.

"The proper teaching of many courses primarily in sciences related to botany and zoology involves the demonstration of living organisms to the students. For this purpose, a wide variety of types should be readily available. Further, more life exhibits should be close to the classrooms, so that they may be utilized within the limits of the usual two-hour laboratory periods. All plant materials should include native forms and a suitable selection of exotic species."

"To meet the needs of both proximity and biological variety, we recommend that the following areas be designated as outdoor biological laboratories:"

1. The main drainage swamps of Bascom Woods, extending west approximately to the line running north from the Tower to Lake Mendota, but excluding that portion west of a line extended northward along the western edge of Bascom Hall to a point 125 feet north of the tower and thence west to the Woods; (see attached map). The area should be designated as a laboratory and the existing collection of plants and animals be maintained and expanded in variety.

"We are preparing detailed information as to the exact limits of each of the areas and the plants to be introduced, and are willing to cooperate in any other way possible to integrate our needs with those of the biology department."

The area north of the proposed new Law School building and east of the proposed west wing of Birge Hall. This is to be planted with plants typical of an oak forest.

"The area south and west of the Birge Hall green-house, to be planted with a selection of exotic species requiring protected conditions, as rhododendrons, flowering dogwood and the like."

"The area between Menlo Hall and Birge Hall, northwest of Birge Hall, to be planted to a variety of hardy shrubs.

"The area east of the Observatory Hill Office Building south of Elizabeth Waters Hall and across the road from the Commerce Building, with the existing collection of cacti to be maintained and expanded in variety."