

Extended Resolution - Yes to the conservation of Vollskogen!

Approved at Student Parliament 4, 12.09.2022

In Vollskogen, also known as the Pentagon Forest, it is planned that a residential area will be built. This will cause that the students living in the student city Pentagon lose their local forest, and thus both a good hiking and outdoor area for students will disappear. In addition, we lose a forest with several ecosystem functions. In return, a basis for conflict due to noise is created between the student city and the potential neighbors in Vollskogen.

Development in Vollskogen is conflict-creating for future residents and for students at Pentagon. Students are active at other times of the day than most of Ås' population, at the same time as they have a different noise level on weekends. Consequently, building ordinary housing next to the student city will be very unfortunate, and will cause more noise-related conflicts. We already have several examples of this. Next to Pentagon is the family housing area Kilehagen, where there has been conflict related to noise from student parties at Pentagon. The construction of student housing in Skogveien has also changed the surrounding area in total and caused several neighboring conflicts related to noise. It is not good for future residents in Vollskogen to hear party noise three days a week, and it is also not good for the students to get complaints and the police at the door because they are having a normal student life.

The Student Parliament is aware of the general norm that there should be quiet in residential areas after 11 pm. The Student Parliament does not defend loud music late at night, or annoying screams and shouts late at night. Here, the students must be aware of their responsibilities and do their part to make the situation better, especially for the neighbors but also for the students in the student city who are bothered by the noise.

Nevertheless, the Student Parliament believes it is best with a practical approach to the question of whether to build even more detached houses / terraced houses so close to a student city. Most students accept noise to a greater extent as part of their neighborhood, and a student city is and will be noisier in the evening and at night than a neighborhood that consists of detached houses / terraced houses. Such noise from a student city can only be regulated to a certain extent. The noise largely escapes to the west from Pentagon because the landscape slopes this way. Housings consisting of families with children, placed in the noise field, can therefore lead to a more tense situation for everyone. With the development in Vollskogen, it will be more difficult to move the parties to another part of the student city, which in turn makes it more difficult to meet neighbors with noise complaints. We will have a less flexible situation. Several complaints about party noise can tie up resources within the police and we assume that these are resources that are already needed elsewhere.

Time after time, housing development is prioritized over vulnerable and important nature, without having an overview of which natural values that will get lost. In Vollskogen, there are several ecosystem services that are worth preserving, such as carbon storage, wind protection and surface water management. This is a forest with the potential to house a greater biodiversity in the future if the forest is preserved. Ås has already degraded several forests and at some point, you have to say stop. In Ås municipality's new municipal plan, it is also clear that there are many other areas close to the city center that are already available for residential purposes, even if we stop the development of Vollskogen. A development of Vollskogen is an irreversible intervention and can never be reversed - then nature will be lost forever.

Vollskogen is frequently used by students and is an important recreational area. When the municipality proposed housing development, this consideration was not considered. The municipality has not investigated whether the forest was used by the students, and hence the

students' actual use and need of the forest has not been considered in the planning process. The plans that were presented to the students at the developer's participation meeting in the winter of 2021 showed that the entire forest will be affected, and the outdoor opportunities will in practice disappear. The near presence of a forest is important for public health, because it makes room for relaxation from everyday stress in addition to offering beautiful surroundings. During the pandemic, many institutions, including the Student Parliament, NMBU and Ås municipality, have stated that they are concerned about mental health. A good measure for students' mental health will therefore be to preserve Vollskogen.

Vollskogen will only have one entrance and exit road for car traffic: Lower Pentagon Road. They will share the road with Pentagon student city, where over a thousand students, children and young people will have it as a school road, at the same time as it will be used as the only road in and out of Vollskogen. At the participation meeting, the developers said that there could be between 1,000 and 2,000 cars a day on this road, which is a large increase from the current level of 300 cars a day. The Student Parliament is therefore concerned about traffic safety for pedestrians and cyclists on the road and is critical against having Lower Pentagon Road as the entrance and exit road to Vollskogen.

Vollskogen bears the mark of having previously been a wetland or swamp forest, which has been extensively ditched. Large parts of the forest are today plantation forest, but parts of it still bear the swamp forest character. NMBU may therefore be interested in the forest for educational purposes, as it can be used for restoration ecological projects, as an example. Human development and well-being depend on well-functioning ecosystems, and Vollskogen has the potential to be the perfect educational space for future ecologists.

The Student Parliament at NMBU believes that:

- Ås municipality should say no to development in Vollskogen.
- The Student Board will work actively to ensure that Ås municipality does not allow development in Vollskogen
- One will cooperate with SiÅs and NMBU to preserve Vollskogen
- Active work will be done to ensure that Ås municipality returns Vollskogen to the LNF area (Agriculture, nature, and outdoor area) in the new draft of the municipal plan.
- Active work will be done to get NMBU to buy Vollskogen, to use the forest for restoration ecological projects
- NMBU shall use its property rights (especially over the Lower Pentagon Road) to actively ensure the students' interests in the case.

Supposing the development of Vollskogen, the Student Parliament at NMBU demands that:

- Nedre Pentagonvei is not to be used as neither an access- nor exit-road
- No more than 100 homes are built
- The development will take the forest's local biological diversity into account
- A 100-meter-wide band of forest shall be preserved between Nedre Pentagonvei and the new buildings, to ensure the students' rightful access to nature
- The stream to the south are opened, and that they establish a forest corridor that connects Vollskogen to the remaining outdoor areas in the south
- The development plans include measures to reduce the use of private cars, including communal parking
- An independent third party will undergo an assessment of the potential loss of biodiversity and green space.

