

Forensic Science Research and Training Laboratory (FSRTL)

What is the FSRTL?

The FSRTL (sometimes called the “body farm”) is a secured, five-acre research facility at Mason’s Science and Technology Campus in Manassas, Virginia. Donors to the FSRTL make it possible to advance forensic science through research, education, and professional training.

What research and training happen here?

Our work focuses on locating and identifying human remains and estimating time since death. Research and training include, but not limited to:

- ✓ Outdoor decomposition rates (surface or buried).
- ✓ Locating clandestine graves (including studies with honeybees and drones).
- ✓ Identifying organic chemical compounds in human decomposition.
- ✓ The effects of animal scavenging.
- ✓ Wound and trauma analysis related to decomposition.
- ✓ DNA recovery and analysis.
- ✓ Cadaver dog training by qualified canine handlers and law enforcement agencies.

Learn more: https://go.gmu.edu/fsrtl_info

How do I support the FSRTL?

Body donation:

- All donors must go through the Virginia State Anatomical Program (VSAP) as required by Virginia law (§ 54.1-2825).
- Pre-registration is encouraged but not required.
- If a donor has already passed, a legal next of kin can complete registration.
- If you live out of state, you are welcome to contact VSAP to discuss eligibility and transportation logistics. In most cases, VSAP will assume responsibility for transportation and further care once a donor is received at a location within Virginia.

Donation info: https://go.gmu.edu/fsrtl_donation

☎ VSAP: (804) 786-2479

You are also welcome to reach out to our team with questions about the FSRTL:

Financial contributions:

Your support sustains donor program operations, equipment, education, and research.

Make a gift: https://go.gmu.edu/fsrtl_support

What happens to a donor’s body once it is donated to the FSRTL?

FSRTL coordinates transportation with VSAP. Donors are respectfully placed in secure research areas for approved research and training programs.

Contact us

✉ FSRTL@gmu.edu

📷 Instagram: @georgemasonfsrtl

📘 Facebook: Forensic Science Research and Training Laboratory

Learn more: 

Body donation: 

Make a gift: 