

GLOBE-GAZETTE

# Opinion page

## Supports ski run at Pilot Knob

A WALK through the area proposed for conversion to ski runs in Pilot Knob State Park dispels many doubts about the project.

The ski enthusiasts, who propose private operation of four ski runs, ask the use of 15 of the park's 320 acres or about 5 per cent of the total.

Only half of the 15 acres would be cleared for the runs and motorized ski lift.

Wooded areas would be retained near the top of the slope (from the nearby tower on top of Pilot Knob, you can't see one run that has been cleared) and between the runs.

The operation would be about 70 to 75 days in duration, starting in December and ending by the first of March.

Parking would be on adjacent private land or in areas already designated for parking on state land. The chalet would be built on private land.

The ski area is more than a half-mile from Dead Man's Lake, a site prized by naturalists, who have objected to the ski project as something that would "destroy the ecology and geographic areas for which the park was originally established."

It is difficult to see how use of 15 acres in the park in the winter only would "destroy" the other natural values.

The ski proponents don't belittle the attitudes of the naturalists and conservationists. They do note, however, that they cleared portions of two proposed runs in February 1963, and again in February 1964, without any apparent disturbance to botanists or other scientists.

There was no public outcry against the clearing work, which was done with the official blessing

of the Iowa State Conservation Commission.

There also is a conflict with a private ski run operated just outside the park by Odell Forslund of Forest City.

He has a single run that he has developed and which served large numbers of skiers three years ago, when snow was plentiful. Lack of snow permitted only three days of skiing two years ago and none this year, however.

Members of the Pilot Knob Ski and Recreation, Inc., which is asking for use of state land, contend that snow-making equipment is essential for sustained operation.

They are supported in this belief by a Minneapolis operator of a ski center who viewed the Pilot Knob slope this week. He said several runs, as are proposed at Pilot Knob, are required to make installation of snow-making equipment financially feasible.

The Pilot Knob Ski and Recreation Club assumes that bidding would be open for private operation of the ski runs. Spokesmen say they don't care who operates the runs—their club, Forslund or any other individual—so long as it is done properly and in a manner to promote this fast-growing sport.

The conservation commission meets in Mason City next Monday and Tuesday. Members are expected to look over the proposed ski site.

It has demonstrated in the past that it looks with favor on such a development in permitting some clearance for proposed ski runs.

It is hoped that the project can be carried into completion, opening the way for the first large-scale ski center in Iowa, without damaging the unique biological community in the park.