

New Day for Slumbering Ski Park



JEFF BEIERMAN/THE WORLD-HERALD

NEW OWNERS: Barry and Wendy Gottsch have bought the former NebraSKI resort in Sarpy County and are undecided about what to do with it. They say they will quickly develop the land if a planning alliance moves to limit development in the area.

Owners' Plans Drawing Interest

BY CHRISTINE LAUE
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

The tops of pine trees poke through the red slats of the ski-lift chairs. Native grasses and weeds camouflage snow-making machines that rest like abandoned artillery in a battlefield.

For two years, the once-thriving ski park in southwestern Sarpy County has been hibernating, marked only by the NebraSKI sign in the hills beside Interstate 80.

Now, new owners will take down the sign or rent it to a different advertiser, sell hundreds of skis and try to auction off the wheels and cables that churned people upward to hours of bliss in the bluffs.

"It was a delight to be around



THE WORLD-HERALD

there because everybody was having fun," said a former owner, Charlie Bystrek. "It was getting a small taste of the Colorado hills right here in Nebraska."

But this winter park never seemed to get enough snow, and, after 1996, Bystrek reopened only for paint-ball wars or private parties.

The new owners are contemplating what to do with the land — leave it be, develop it for homes or open it to commercial hunting. What they decide is drawing some interest because the area — between the growing cities of Omaha and Lincoln — is attracting attention as more people search for places to build homes.

Much of the interest has come from a group consisting of natural resources districts and several state agencies.

In September 1998, the group,

called the Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance, developed a plan aimed at capitalizing on the Platte's scenic beauty while balancing economic expansion and rural preservation.

Barry Gottsch, who owns Gottsch Feeding Corp. with his three brothers and the Indian Creek Golf Course in Elkhorn, purchased the NebraSKI property last summer and says he likes the idea of preserving trees and wildlife but doesn't want to be told how to use his property.

"There's a little bit of a conflict in myself and my wife, Wendy," he said. "We don't want to develop it because we love it. But we want that

See RESORT Page 2