

# Residents of Fort Ransom Area Building Winter Recreation Site

By JOHN LOHMAN  
Staff Writer

FORT RANSOM, N.D. — A winter recreation area is being developed in the Sheyenne River Valley near here by area residents.

Work on the project is being supplied free by farmers, businessmen and townsfolk in a community effort.

Site of the recreation area will be about a mile north of this Ransom County community on the west side of the Sheyenne River Valley.

The site has been an anthill of activity the past three Sundays as trees and brush have been cleared, trees trimmed and slopes bladed for ski and toboggan runs.

Work has been nearly completed on a slalom course, a long downhill run and a beginners' slope for skiers, as well as a toboggan slide — with ample space available for more runs.

A rope tow is being constructed by R. D. Larsen of Fort Ransom. It will run about 1,500 feet and a charge will be made for use of it by tobogganers and skiers.

Also planned is some type of ski lodge. Lowell Johnson, postmaster, said it appears at present that a building will have to be moved onto the site for this purpose on a temporary basis, with hopes of interesting a private individual in operating a lodge and possibly building a permanent structure in the future.

It is also planned to have rental equipment available. There is a parking area that will readily accommodate over 100 cars, with room also for expansion on this front.

Plans are, Johnson said, to organize a local ski club to run the venture.

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The project is a direct result of efforts of the Ransom County Rural Development Association (RDA), of which S. M. Thorfinnson of Lisbon is county chairman. The association was formed about 15 months ago, with the purpose of promoting development of projects in the rural area.

Johnson said it was decided at a meeting of the RDA Recreation Committee — co-chairmanned by Virgil Anderson and Walter Johnson of Fort Ransom — with area residents to undertake the project

so as to "provide a recreation facility for area people."

After a survey of the area, the site was picked by the Recreation Committee and Anderson "got a bunch together and went up to do the work."

The recreation area is located on land owned by Robert Billing and will be used by him for pasture during the off season, Johnson said.

Work was started on the project after church on Oct. 28. Besides people in the Fort Ransom area donating labor, there have been men from Enderlin and Lisbon here, as well as other area communities.

Groups of between 50 and 60 persons have been working on the project on Sundays and a lot of spectators coming and going.

It was "just like an anthill up here," Johnson said.

The use of chainsaws, tractors and trucks also has been donated and some county equipment has been used.

Johnson said, "The people in this area are really behind it."

Some of the local women also

have been pitching in by supplying coffee and lunches.

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From the top of the hill which overlooks the picturesque and historic Sheyenne Valley in which the town of Fort Ransom is situated, there is about a 400-foot drop, with the ski runs to extend over 4,000 feet.

"If we can get in with a crawler-type tractor and blader," Anderson said, "We hope to put in a jump with 110 feet of landing room."

Planning also calls for possibly developing a skating area on the river below, where it forms a horseshoe, and the development of a bobsled run is under consideration.

"Last winter, over 36 inches of snow fell in the hills around here," Johnson said. Snow also sweeps off the prairies into the valley and hills he added, so lack of snow should not be much of a problem.

It also is expected that the trees and brush on the hills will help catch and hold the snow, and the planting of evergreen

trees and shrubbery to help hold snow also is planned.

Hopes are that work on the runs can be completed this week, with only the completion of the tow and a lodge left. Then, of course, there will be the wait for ample snow to give the recreation venture a test.

"There probably will have to be some changes made, but we think we have something," Johnson concluded. No name yet has been chosen for the site.

The site is easily accessible from N.D. Highways 46 or 27. There also is a scenic drive through the Sheyenne Valley from Little Yellowstone Park on N.D. 46 to Lisbon, passing through Fort Ransom and the recreation area.

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The RDA also is studying the possibility of providing picnic tables and marking historic sites on the drive, and plans are being discussed for improving the Fort Ransom historic site near town in an effort to make the valley a year-round attraction.



**SKI PROJECT ENTHUSIASTS:** Pictured here are three Fort Ransom, N. D., men, who have been active in the work toward the establishment of a winter recreation area near Fort Ransom. Left to right are Virgil Anderson, R. D. Larsen and Lowell Johnson.

(Forum Photos)

## \$29,000 Pledged To Hatton Project

HATTON, N. D.—H. M. Nash, financial chairman of the proposed Hatton Rest Home, reported that \$29,000 has been pledged or donated to the project.

## Appropriation to Provide First Field Station Change

BISMARCK, N.D. — A \$400,000 appropriation recently approved by Congress will be used to build new laboratory facilities at the Great Plains Field Station in

station so that a team approach may be used in solving problems.

Reichman said that the work of the station is such that it can