

Private group files suit to protect Wilderness Park

By Mike Schmoldt

A private group, Citizens to Preserve Wilderness Park, Inc. will file suit Monday in Federal District Court to block construction of the Lincoln West by-pass, according to the group's attorney, Karen Flowers. The by-pass would link U.S. Highway 77 and Interstate 80 overtaking 20 acres of park land.

The citizens are suing the Nebraska State Department of Roads and U.S. Secretary of Transportation Brock Adams. The suit will ask that all progress on the project be halted until the matter can be resolved. This includes a road design hearing to get community input scheduled for Nov. 21 by the roads department.

Flowers, said the suit will seek to prove that Secretary Adams violated a provision of the 1969 National Environmental Protection Act when he approved construction of the road. The law says the secretary shall not approve the use of public lands for any project unless there are no "prudent and feasible alternatives or unless all possible steps to minimize harm" to the park have been taken.

Secretary Adams based his decision on an environmental impact statement and testimony at hearings to

determine the location of the by-pass, Flowers said. The information he used does not support his decision to approve construction, she said.

Lawyers for the citizens will try to prove Adams had insufficient information and also will provide possible "prudent and feasible alternatives." These include construction of the by-pass further west than is now proposed, she said.

Engineer didn't know

Charles Nutter, deputy state engineer, said he did not know until Wednesday afternoon that the suit would be filed Monday against the department.

"They've threatened to do that for a long time," Nutter said. He said he did not want to comment on the suit until he had talked to attorneys for the roads department.

Two other organizations and three individuals are joining Citizens to Preserve Wilderness Park, Inc. as plaintiffs in the case. The organizations are Citizens for Environmental Improvement and the Bluestem Sierra Club.

One of the individuals is Marge Schlitt, 2600 C St.,

a Girl Scout leader, who also is secretary of Citizens to Preserve Wilderness Park, Inc. She said she is concerned about what the highway will do to the day camp at Wilderness Park. She said proposals are to take 200 feet from the west edge of the day camp and erect a sound barrier wall to reduce noise.

Unique experience

"I believe in the unique experience of day camping," she said. "It is too valuable to be lost needlessly."

She said the camp is used heavily by scouts, city recreation groups, UNL classes and public schools.

Other individuals filing suit are a homeowner whose house would be near the proposed road and Doug McCallum, a UNL physical education instructor who uses the camp for outdoor classes.

Dr. Paul Stoesz, chairman of Citizens to Preserve Wilderness Park, Inc., said he expects to win the suit.

"We want a permanent restraint to their ever doing this in the Wilderness Park area again," Stoesz said.

He said the citizens met with the City Parks and Recreation Department and the Chamber of Commerce to inform them of their view. He said the department of roads showed them a courtesy meeting last week exactly where the proposed road would go.

According to Schlitt, the citizens learned at that meeting that the roads department was planning to take more acreage from the park than originally was proposed.

"It's appalling—their lack of concern about how much land they're taking out there," Schlitt said.

She expressed confidence in the soundness of the citizens' legal case. She said copies of the suit would be handed out at a press conference on the west steps of the Federal Building when the suit is filed Monday.

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Photo by Ted Kirk

The 11 NU regents meet today, for the second time this semester. They will discuss graduate tuition at their 1 p.m. meeting.

Regents to discuss alternative graduate tuition rates

A report examining alternatives for graduate tuition payments will be discussed by the NU Board of Regents at their monthly meeting 1 p.m. today in Regents Hall.

The report presents three alternatives to the existing graduate tuition rate, according to William Erskine, NU executive vice president.

Currently, NU graduate students pay \$21 per credit hour, the same rate as undergraduate students. The report

examines the impact increases of 25, 30 and 35 percent (\$26.25, \$26.30 or \$28.35) would have on the university's financial status, Erskine said.

Depending on which alternative is used, UNL could gain from \$300,000 to \$400,000 yearly from an increase in graduate tuition, Erskine said. The University of Nebraska at Omaha and the University of Nebraska Medical Center also would have substantial increases, according to Erskine.

Erskine said the report reviewed differentiated graduate tuition rates at other Big 8 schools and land grant universities.

The report has been presented to the regents and will be discussed at the meeting today, Erskine said. He said he did not know if a vote would be taken.

Other items on the regents' agenda include an expected vote on improving communications between college deans and department chairmen concerning staff appointments.

Omaha Regent Kermit Hansen said the board will discuss how to spend the surplus from the bonds used to fund the residence halls and Nebraska Unions. Hansen said there is a yearly planned surplus from the bonds that is used to make improvements in the residence halls and the unions. He added that he did not know the amount of the surplus.

Discussion on Memorial Stadium expansion is not scheduled, but Hansen said the topic could arise. At the last regents meeting, stadium expansion plans were sent back to Hansen's business affairs committee, but the Omaha regent said his committee has not discussed the issue.

Statements list needs, expectations

By Anne Carothers

The Union Advisory Board is letting ASUN know exactly what they expect from a fees allocation body, regardless of the structure of that body.

The Union Board Wednesday night approved a statement to be joined with statements from both Union program councils stating their "needs and expectations" from a fees allocation body.

The statement is a reaction to an ASUN proposal to change the structure of a fees allocation body.

A Union Board opinion on a structure for a fees allocation body is not included in the statement although the board has discussed the possibility of including such a statement.

Union Director Al Bennett also reviewed and approved the statement, according to Union Board President Dave Roehr.

According to the statement, the Union expects the fees body to "produce non-political and rational recommendations." The Union also requests equal representation on a fees body if other major fee users are represented on that body.

Also requested is an ample amount of time for the Union to prepare a workable budget and review of the budget to present to the fees allocation body.

The Union stated that they need "sufficient notice of any public hearings or actions to be taken by the fee review and recommending body on its proposed budget."

Although the statement does not specify any requests about membership of a fees body, it does state that the Union thinks there should be student participation in the allocation process, and that "an intellectual and experience base be established as the criteria for membership."

Roehr explained that the Union is concerned with the basis on which the members of the fees body are picked, rather than who the individual board members are.

Also included in the statement are various "items of understanding" between the Union and the fees body.

The Union agrees to supply any relevant financial data to the fees body to aid them in their allocations, according to the statement.

The Union also wants a new fees body to understand that the Union budget is not "padded" and accurately reflects the Union's needs.

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