

# Ecologists: Lincoln growth hurts park

WILDERNESS from page 1

about how the park will be affected. The concrete foundations of buildings and sidewalks and parking lots will increase runoff from rain water, he said. That excess water has only one place to go — down into Salt Creek, further increasing the chances of flooding, he said.

As more people are working and driving near the park, more pollution can be expected, too, he said.

Melva Plouzek is a neighbor to the property Ridge Development plans to industrialize. Plouzek has been protesting Ridge Development's efforts 1996, when the development plans started.

She doesn't understand why the city needs to rezone this property for industry when Lincoln has other areas zoned for industry that it does not use.

Michelle Haddix, projects coordinator for Ecology Now, said stopping the development near Wilderness Park is at the top of the group's agenda this year.

Ecology Now has tried to gather signatures for a petition. The petition asks for a moratorium to be put on land within a half-mile radius of the park until an environmental impact study is complete.

The city of Lincoln's Ecological Advisory Board has had an environmental impact study planned for Wilderness Park, she said. The moratorium could put off development near the park for one to two years.

Haddix said she now has about 30 signatures. There is not a certain number of signatures Ecology Now is trying to get, Haddix said. She just wants to show that many people are opposed to the proposed development.

Seacrest said the proposal is in the final stages of the Lincoln Planning Department's review. Seacrest and his client are asking for three things:

- To change the phasing plan from phase two to one, which would allow them to start developing now.

- To formally include the area into the city limits. The land now sits less than a mile from the city's southern border.

“When you go and tamper with flood plains, you're asking for trouble ...”

**ROBERT KLEIN**  
environmental studies major

- To rezone the property to permit an employment center. This site was set as one of three sites for an employment center by the 1995-96 Lincoln City Council.

Seacrest said this would be a smoke-free industry, so people don't need to worry about pollution. They already have plans for an employment center, which would be an office park with lots of green space, not a typical industrial building, he said.

He said the development would benefit businesses and people in Lincoln. For instance, the businesses that build there could create thousands of jobs for residents.

Dramatic increases in property values are expected to continue. The development also would bring retail and restaurants for south Lincoln's growing population.

But environmentalists still are worried about the fate of the park.

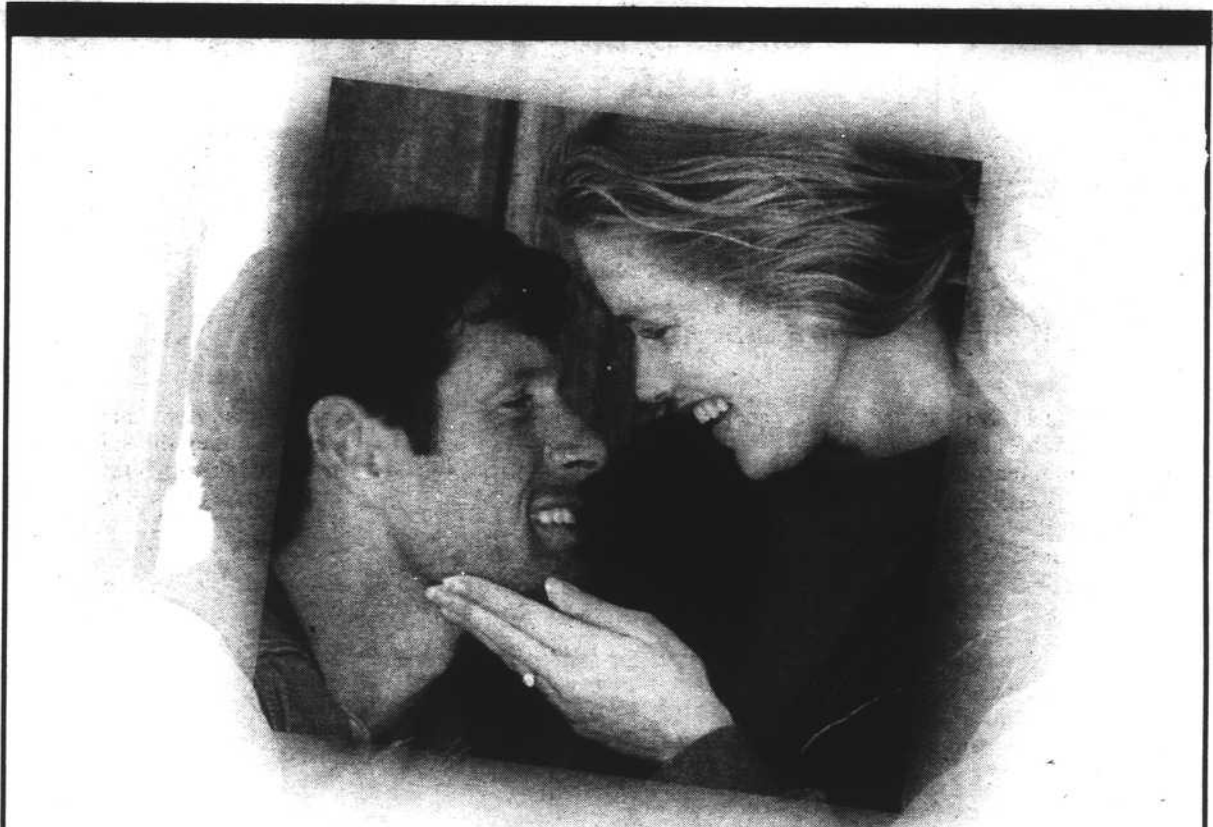
After the development proposal passes through the city's planning department, it will go to the Lincoln City Planning Commission.

A date has not yet been set for the planning commission to have a public hearing on the proposal.

Members of Ecology Now and student environmentalists said they plan to be there to oppose it, and they hope students will join them in their cause.

Reed-Klein said she also wants to protect the park because she thinks it is a place for tranquility and refuge from the city.

“For every inch of the city we pave, the more, not less, park we need.”



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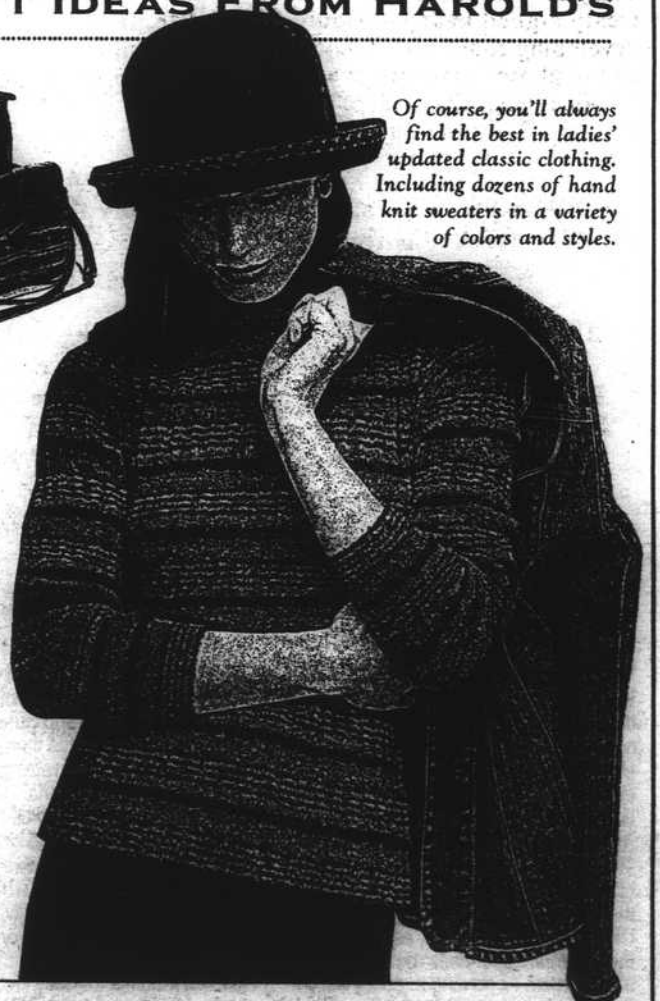
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