

It's all downhill from here

Ski slopes to open near Springfield

By Jane Fullerton

The News-Leader

BRIGHTON — Skiing in the Ozarks will no longer be a sport limited to area lakes during the summer.

A Polk County couple plan to bring skiing — the colder variety — to Ozarks hills during the winter.

Bill and Becki Durbin of Morrisville hope to open the Snow Bluff Ski Area in December — weather permitting.

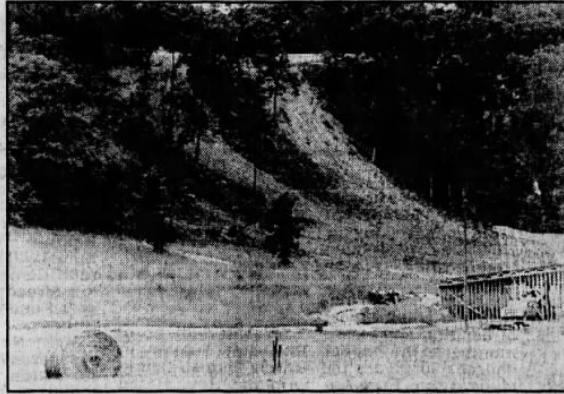
The bulldozed hills that soon will be transformed into eight ski slopes can be seen from Missouri 13 along the Sac River, about halfway between Bolivar and Springfield.

The ski area will resemble a Colorado resort on a smaller scale: The ski slopes — of beginning and intermediate difficulty — will be serviced by a tow rope and chair lift. Manufactured snow will cover the slopes. A lodge with a restaurant will sit at the foot of the hills.

The Durbins — who would not disclose how much they have invested in the ski slopes — have been researching the business for more than two years. Their ambitious plans include:

■ The eight ski slopes to be opened in December. Two will be

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Becki and Bill Durbin, above, of Morrisville stand at the top of the rocky hill that they are turning into a snow skiing slope, which they plan to have open by December. At left, bulldozers have cleared pathways down the Polk County hill where the couple is building the resort. Construction also is under way on a ski lodge at the foot of the slopes.

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