

Proposed golf course in trouble

By Hope Neelson
Emerald Reporter

A proposal to build an 18-hole golf course on 150-acres of Alton Baker Park is losing the support of Lane County Commissioners because of unexpected opposition from local community groups.

According to Lane County Commissioner Jerry Rust, the County had been working on the proposal to build a golf course in the eastern section of the park since last spring and through the summer. County Commissioners approved a final proposal, or bid, for developers to design the golf course last June.

Rust said the County was poised to release the bid to developers when opposition to the golf course seemed to grow overnight. The County received

more than 4,000 signatures rejecting the proposal from a community group called Alton Baker For All Of Us.

"The tide of public opposition has turned dramatically against the plan," Rust said.

One longtime supporter of the golf course blames the county commissioners for killing the plan by refusing to release the bid to developers, according to the *The Register Guard*.

But an ABFAOU steering committee member, John McAlpine, said there are many good reasons for halting the proposal.

For one, he said the proposed golf course would take up 40 percent of the 375 acre park.

"The question that we're asking is should 40 percent of this

prime, metropolitan park, which is located in a rapidly growing area, be used for a single activity, played by a relatively small percentage of the population," he said.

"Our answer is a resounding 'no,'" he added.

McAlpine said that other amenities in the park would be affected, such as Pre's trail, the orchard, a pond and a canal.

Golf course architects who inspected Alton Baker in 1986 concluded that if an 18-hole golf course were built, it would not be compatible with the other uses of the park.

The Lane County Commissioners are scheduled for further discussion on whether to proceed with plans for a golf course Oct. 10.



A lone biker makes her way through the proposed site of a 150-acre golf course in Alton Baker Park. Photo by Jeff Pavia.



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