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# PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release through April 21, 2017

## Mount Jumbo South Zone Opens Friday, April 7

Mount Jumbo's South Zone will re-open to public use on Friday, April 7, bringing the area's annual winter wildlife closure to a close. About 40-50 elk remain in Jumbo's South Zone; trail users and their pets are asked to avoid the herd while hiking. Dogs must be leashed in the south zone for the next few weeks to prevent pets from chasing wildlife. Allowing a dog to chase or harass hoofed game animals is against state law and can result in a fine of up to \$1,000.

During a fly-over this past Saturday, Montana FWP Wildlife Biologist Liz Bradley counted 123 elk in the Jumbo herd—a record number that hasn't been seen since 2009. On Saturday, Bradley reported there were 86 elk in the South Zone, 25 in the North Zone, and another dozen animals on other areas of the mountain. Bradley says emerging green vegetation is still restricted to lower elevations. "If we get a few sunny days, I think the spring green-up will start to advance fairly quickly and the elk will have more options [to avoid people and dogs]," Bradley said.

As the snowpack recedes, the herd will move further north, eventually settling into its traditional summer range in the Rattlesnake Wilderness and Marshall Canyon. Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks will continue to track the movements of the Jumbo herd to assess population size and health.

The South Zone includes all points south of the Saddle Road, which bisects Mount Jumbo's conservation lands and can be reached at the north end of Lincoln Hills Drive. Jumbo's North Zone (all points north of the Saddle Road) will remain closed until May 1. The "L" trail and the US West easement

road remain open all year. Hikers must stay on the designated trails only; off-trail travel is prohibited. For closure maps and more information, visit [missoulaparks.org](http://missoulaparks.org).

Those who violate the wildlife winter closure may be cited for trespassing and may incur fines and penalties. Please call 911 to report closure violations. Vehicle license plates or other identifying characteristics will help law enforcement identify trespassers. The Mount Jumbo winter closure is mandated by the Mount Jumbo Management Plan and the City Conservation Lands Management plan, both of which were adopted by the City Council after extensive public processes.

The City conducts an inter-agency review with Montana FWP and others when considering adaptations to the regular closure dates. Changes to the winter wildlife closure dates are largely based on weather conditions and the movements of wildlife on the mountain. For more information, visit [www.missoulaparks.org](http://www.missoulaparks.org) or phone 721-PARK.

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