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## MISSOULA PARKS AND RECREATION PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

For immediate release through March 18, 2022

### **Mount Jumbo South Zone closure extended, opening date TBA**

***Jumbo's "L" Trail and the US West Road remain open, dogs must be leashed to protect wildlife***

In consultation with wildlife biologists at Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP), Parks and Recreation has extended the Mt. Jumbo South Zone winter wildlife closure. Parks staff will post a projected opening date on March 18 at [www.missoulaparks.org](http://www.missoulaparks.org). The closure, which typically ends March 15, protects 75 to 90 elk and other animals that inhabit Jumbo's lower elevations to feed and regain their strength after a long winter.

Wildlife managers report that Jumbo elk remain in the South Zone despite dwindling snowpack and need continued protection from human and canine disturbance. FWP Wildlife Biologist Liz Bradley says early spring is a critical time for elk because they are coming out of the winter in the poorest physical condition they will be in all year.

"For elk and deer, the spring green-up of vegetation can't come soon enough—so they can start replenishing the physical reserves they lost over the winter," Bradley says. "Female elk and deer are doubly stressed as they try to push through these tough conditions carrying the young they will deliver in late May and June." Conservation land managers say the South Zone will reopen when most of the herd has moved to higher elevations in the Jumbo's North Zone.

Much of Mount Jumbo is closed annually on December 1 to protect wintering wildlife. The "L" Trail and US West Trail remain open all year; dogs must be leashed to protect wildlife. Jumbo's North Zone, which includes all points north of the Saddle Road, will remain closed until May 1 or later, depending on weather conditions and elk presence. The South Zone includes all points south of the Saddle Road. Visit [www.missoulaparks.org](http://www.missoulaparks.org) for real-time updates on the Jumbo wildlife closure and maps of closure areas.

The City of Missoula would like to thank residents for their cooperation in protecting Mount Jumbo's unique natural resources. Visitors must stay on the "L" and US West trails and leash their pets to protect wildlife. Please call 911 to report wildlife closure violations. For more information, call (406) 721-PARK (7275).

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