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## MISSOULA PARKS AND RECREATION PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

For immediate release through March 23, 2022

### **Mount Jumbo South Zone opens to the public March 23**

***Dogs must be leashed to near wildlife.***

Mount Jumbo's South Zone, which includes the Lincoln Hills Trailhead and all points south of the Saddle Road, will reopen to the public at 6 a.m. on Wednesday, March 23.

The Mt. Jumbo winter wildlife closure starts on December 1 of each year and is designed to protect the 75 to 90 elk and other animals that inhabit Jumbo's lower elevations to feed throughout the winter and into early spring. Closure dates may vary depending on weather conditions, snowpack and elk presence.

The North Zone, which includes all points north of the Saddle Road, will remain closed until May 1 or later. Visit [www.missoulaparks.org](http://www.missoulaparks.org) for real-time updates on the Jumbo wildlife closure and maps of closure areas.

FWP Wildlife Biologist Liz Bradley says Mt. Jumbo elk need extended protection from human and canine disturbance in early spring because they are coming out of the harsh winter in poor physical condition.

"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."

The annual South Zone closure ends when most of the herd has moved to the higher elevations of Jumbo's North Zone—usually around March 15 or later.

The City of Missoula would like to thank residents for their cooperation in protecting Mount Jumbo's unique natural resources. Please call 911 to report wildlife closure violations; trespassing during the closure is prohibited by law and violators may be fined up to \$500. For more information, visit [www.missoulaparks.org](http://www.missoulaparks.org).

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