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PRESS RELEASE

OPEN SPACE UPDATES

Mount Jumbo Forest Thinning Project Begins April 25

On April 25, Parks and Recreation contractors will begin a summer-long forest thinning project on Mount Jumbo's saddle. The project will help reduce the impact of mountain pine beetle, mitigate wildfire danger, and restore Jumbo's forest to a healthier state. Small, crowded and insect-infested trees will be removed to allow larger, healthier trees to flourish. Trees infested with mountain pine beetle will be burned along with slash to prevent the infestation of surrounding trees. Smoke may be visible from the mountain at these times. No trail closures are expected, and much of the project is located some distance away from Jumbo's trails.

Thinning will begin in units 7 and 8 (see attached map) and will then proceed onto Units 1 through 4 later in May after Jumbo's North Zone opens.

Mount Jumbo North Zone re-opens May 1

To protect wintering elk and mule deer, much of Mount Jumbo is closed to recreational use during winter months. Areas north of the Saddle Trail, including the 3.8-mile North Loop, re-open to public use on Sunday, May 1. The Saddle Trail is located at the north end of Lincoln Hills Drive.

Dogs must be under strict voice and sight control on Mount Jumbo, except where otherwise posted. Pet owners are asked to respect conservation lands, adjacent private property, other park visitors and wildlife by controlling their dogs at all times and removing their pet's waste. Free Mutt Mitts and loaner leashes are provided at trailheads.

Open Space Sheep Herd Returns

Around May 15, the City's woolliest employees will again return to Missoula's public open spaces to eat noxious weeds in the North Hills and on Mount Jumbo. About 400 sheep will be deployed to help control leafy spurge, spotted knapweed and dalmation toadflax. The herd will alternate between the North Hills and Mount Jumbo throughout the summer. The City of Missoula is committed to employing sheep as an environmentally responsible, low-cost option for controlling noxious weeds and asks for cooperation from dog owners on conservation lands.

The number one threat to the herd while they are on City open space is attacks from domestic dogs. To protect the sheep and avoid conflict, hikers with dogs are asked to avoid the herd and to keep dogs leashed when hiking near the sheep. Leashes are strongly recommended even for placid pets—dogs have a strong hunting instinct and may be unable to resist chasing livestock. Each year, several sheep are wounded or killed on public open space by dogs—much to the dismay of the dogs' surprised owners.

If you're headed out for a hike with your pooch and the trailhead is posted with a sheep advisory, put a leash on your dog. If you forgot the leash, the City's lend-a-leash program provides leashes at many trailheads. If a dog attacks livestock on City open space, the owner will be cited for animal control ordinance violations and will also be required to pay restitution for any medical bills or the death of sheep. Failure to adhere to these and posted notices could result in fines, seasonal closures, or other measures to protect conservation lands and programs.

For more information, call 721-PARK or visit the Parks and Recreation website at www.missoulaparks.org.

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