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PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

For immediate release through June 15, 2010

Sheep injured on City open space by off-leash dog

Missoula Parks and Recreation's weed-eating sheep herd suffered its first casualty on May 20 when an unleashed dog attacked and seriously injured a sheep on Missoula's North Hills. The ewe, who is expected to survive the attack, suffered a torn ear and deep wounds to her face and leg. The dog's owner was cited by Missoula City-County Animal Control for "dog at large" and is required to pay restitution to the sheep's owner. The herd began working on the North Hills Open Space on May 16 to eat noxious weeds.

Citizens are required to keep dogs leashed when hiking near the sheep. Dog owners are often surprised when their pets' predatory instincts cause them to behave aggressively toward livestock. Each year, several sheep on City open space are killed by off-leash dogs who are not normally aggressive toward other animals. If you are not sure how your dog will behave near livestock, please do not risk the lives of other animals by allowing your dog to run off-leash. The sheep herd is protected by guard dogs, and your dog risks injury if he threatens the herd.

At all times, dogs must be under voice restraint on City open space, and they must be leashed in designated areas. "Voice Restraint" means that the dog's owner or custodian can see the dog, is personally within seventy-five feet of the dog, is able to effectively control and recall the dog at all times and is not allowing the dog to chase or harass other animals. If you are not certain your dog can meet this standard, please respect other people and animals and leash your pet.

Please report any violations of animal regulations to City-County Animal Control at 541-7387. If Animal Control officers are unavailable, please note the date, time, location and parties involved in any incident involving dogs on open space and report to Missoula Parks and Recreation at 552-6277. Courts can levy fines up to \$275 for a "dog at large" citation, and restitution can include all veterinary and transportation expenses and the replacement value of the sheep.

(end)

FOR RELEASE FRIDAY, MAY 21, 2010