



## FIRE DEPARTMENT

625 E. Pine, Missoula, MT 59802  
Office (406)552-6210 Fax (406)552-6184  
[www.ci.missoula.mt.us/fire](http://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/fire)



### Missoula Fire Department Press Release

For immediate release through April 11, 2014

Media Contact: Jason Diehl, Fire Chief, 552-6210

Parks & Recreation Media Contact: Morgan Valliant, 523-6263

### **City partners with irrigation company to remove Milltown Dam debris from park**

The Orchard Homes Irrigation Company is partnering with the City of Missoula to remove sinker logs pulled from the Clark Fork River and temporarily stored along the Riverfront Trail. The irrigation company has been removing the logs, which were released from the Milltown Dam removal project, to protect irrigation ditch infrastructure downstream. To dispose of the logs, the Missoula Fire Department will begin a controlled burn in the Clark Fork Natural Park, located on the south shore of the river between Higgins Ave. and Orange Street, the week of April 7.

Park and Recreation officials, working with Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, the City-County Health Department, City Floodplain Administration and the Fire Department have determined that burning the heavy, 10-to-12-foot logs is the most environmentally sound way to dispose of them. Hauling the logs off-site with heavy equipment would cause substantial disruption to the park and riverbank, cost tens of thousands of dollars and would necessitate closure of the Riverfront Trail for several days.

Parks and Recreation will restore and re-plant the area this spring and fall. The Orchard Homes Irrigation Company is reimbursing City Fire for staff time to monitor the controlled burn. In addition, the irrigation company has modified their ditch infrastructure to prevent these sinker logs from entering the irrigation system in the future.

As required by the City-County Health Department burn permit, burning will take place when air quality conditions are good and wind speeds are conducive to good smoke dispersal. The exact start time and duration of the burn operation is dependent on the weather and appropriate burning conditions. Visit [www.missoulaparks.org](http://www.missoulaparks.org) for updates on projected burning dates.

Many sinker logs from the dam removal have been milled and used throughout the park system for a variety of structures, including the new park pavilions at Silver Park and Fort Missoula Park. The City has a surplus of this timber set aside for future projects, and has determined these specific logs are not suitable for re-use. Burning is a cost effective way to remove the logs while minimizing impacts to the park and floodplain. State law requires the logs be removed from the floodplain, because their presence affects the river's base flood elevation and could be dangerous to lives and property during a flood.

For more information, visit [www.missoulaparks.org](http://www.missoulaparks.org). For information about the site restoration or general management of the Clark Fork Natural Park, contact Morgan Valliant at 552-6263.

(end)