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## MISSOULA PARKS AND RECREATION PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

For immediate release through May 8, 2023

### **Mount Jumbo North Zone wildlife closure extended**

- *North Zone opening date is to be determined, depending on weather/vegetation green-up.*
- *Jumbo's South Zone is open.*

In consultation with state wildlife biologists, Parks and Recreation has extended the Mount Jumbo North Zone winter wildlife closure beyond the usual May 1 opening date. The North Zone, which includes all points north of the Saddle Road, will open in the next few weeks as the Jumbo elk herd moves into its summer range in the Rattlesnake Wilderness Area.

Much of Mount Jumbo is closed annually on December 1 to protect wintering wildlife. The annual closure protects 75 to 95 elk and other animals inhabiting Jumbo's lower elevations to feed and regain strength after a long winter. Low temperatures and extended snow cover have delayed Jumbo's spring green-up, leaving the elk and other wildlife without adequate food at higher elevations. Jumbo's South Zone, which includes all points south of the Saddle Road, opened April 13. The "L" Trail and US West Road remain open all year.

According to FWP Wildlife Manager Liz Bradley, early spring is a critical time for elk because they are coming out of the winter in their poorest physical condition. "For elk and deer, the spring green-up can't come soon enough—so they can start replenishing the physical reserves they lost over the winter. Most years, we see the hillsides starting to green up by mid-to-late March, but this year's long winter has delayed that," Bradley says. "Female elk and deer are doubly stressed as they try to push through these tough conditions carrying young they will deliver in late May and June."

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**MORE**

Parks and Recreation staff regularly monitor elk presence throughout the winter with assistance from the [citizen science Elk Spotters Program](#). Starting in early March, staff regularly monitor spring vegetation status further north on Mount Jumbo. Resource managers balance elk presence, vegetation green-up, and spring weather forecasts to determine appropriate opening dates to protect overwintering elk.

Please check the [Conservation Lands Closures webpage](#) for real-time updates on the North Zone reopening date.

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.

For more information, call 721-PARK (7275.) Visit [www.missoulaparks.org](http://www.missoulaparks.org) for maps and more information.

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