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STAGE II FIRE RESTRICTIONS TO BEGIN FRIDAY

Stage II fire restrictions will go into effect at 12:01 a.m. Friday, July 19, on City of Missoula open space and conservation lands.

Missoula Fire Chief Gordy Hughes and Mayor Andrea Davis agree to join federal, state and county officials in moving to Stage II restrictions because of continuing dry conditions and hot weather. The current fire danger is rated as Extreme.

"With recent vegetative fire starts in and around the Missoula Valley, coupled with regional weather patterns, the move to Stage II restrictions is warranted," Hughes said. "Fire conditions are deteriorating daily, and we feel that it is in the best interest of public safety to act accordingly with the move to these restrictions. If conditions persist, we may consider closures of properties owned and/or managed by the City."

Further restrictions may involve closures of public lands, but most likely will be recreational "hoot owl" closures beginning in the afternoons.

Stage II restrictions prohibit campfires, which are prohibited on public lands in the city year round. Smoking is prohibited except within an enclosed vehicle or building or while stopped in an area that is clear of all flammable materials in a 3-foot circle.

Stage II restrictions on City open space and conservation lands also prohibit operating motorized vehicles off designated roads and trails; operating any internal combustion engine, welding or operating acetylene or other torch with open flame between 1 p.m. and 1 a.m.; or using an explosive during the same hours. These activities are normally prohibited on city open space and conservation lands.

The areas affected by the restrictions include the centerpiece conservation and park lands of Mount Jumbo; Mount Sentinel; North Hills; the Kim Williams Trail; Greenough Park; and the Tower Street conservation area, as well as all other City-owned conservation lands. See the City Parks, Trails, and Open Space map online <http://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/468/available-maps>. The printed map is also available at Parks and Recreation offices at 600 Cregg Lane.

Please remember that City parks that are not irrigated are also extremely dry.

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