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PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release through July 15, 2010

220 Acres Added To Mount Jumbo Open Space

Missoulians will have another 220 acres on Mount Jumbo to explore and enjoy when the City and County's latest open space acquisition opens July 15. Citizens are invited to a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Thursday, July 15, at 11 a.m.

The new parcel permanently links East Missoula, Mount Jumbo Open Space and the Rattlesnake Valley. It includes a one-mile gravel road for exceptional hiking and biking access to Marshall Canyon, and it protects one mile of Marshall Creek and vital wildlife habitat. The area includes critical elk winter range and adds Marshall Creek and riparian areas to the existing features of Mount Jumbo Open Space. The gravel road also provides access to U.S. Forest Service lands to the north of Mount Jumbo.

"This is a wonderful addition to our City's Open Space System that will allow the public recreational access to almost the entire mountain and allow us to manage the mountain as a whole, from the open grasslands on the western face of the mountain to the forested hillsides on the backside in Marshall Canyon," said Jackie Corday, the City's Open Space Program Manager.

To explore the area, start at Mount Jumbo's Lincoln Hills trailhead and travel northeast on the Saddle Road just over one mile to a blue metal cattle gate. The new parcel begins at the cattle gate and continues east to Marshall Canyon Road. From East Missoula, travel approximately 1.5 miles north on Marshall Canyon Road and look for a gravel road on the left which connects to the Saddle Road. The road is always gated to prevent vehicle access, but it offers easy access for hikers and bike riders to enjoy beautiful views and vistas, prolific wildflower blooms in the spring and summer, and quiet ponderosa forests.

The land was conveyed to the City and County through the Montana Legacy Project, a joint effort of The Nature Conservancy and The Trust for Public Land to conserve 310,000 acres of former Plum Creek lands in northwestern Montana.

"It's gratifying to work with the City of Missoula to expand and enhance the Mt. Jumbo conservation area," said Jim Berkey, Land Protection Specialist at The Nature Conservancy. "From our perspective this is an ideal outcome that balances public recreation and resource conservation so close to the heart of the city."

The Nature Conservancy also acquired other adjacent land as part of the Montana Legacy Project and will continue to pursue conservation outcomes through partnerships with USFS, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, local government entities and others in the next few years.

Open Space Bond funds were used to purchase the parcel for \$1000 per acre, for a total of \$220,000. The land will be maintained by the City's Conservation Lands Management division of the Parks and Recreation Department.

Mayor John Engen, members of the Open Space Advisory Committee and The Nature Conservancy staff will officially open the new parcel on July 15. Those interested in attending the ribbon-cutting ceremony should meet at the Lincoln Hills trailhead at 11 a.m. on July 15 to walk to the Saddle Road cattle gate. Please call Jackie Corday at 552-6267 if you need transportation from the trailhead to the ceremony site. For maps and photos of the new parcel, visit www.missoulaparks.org. For more information about the Montana Legacy Project, visit <http://www.nature.org/wherewework/northamerica/states/montana/preserves/art29100.html>.

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