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PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

For immediate release through September 28, 2013

Local physicians prescribe a walk in the park to their patients

Join Missoula Parks and Recreation and Community Medical Center for the free "Prescription For Fun" Walk at Fort Missoula Park on Saturday, September 28, at 9 a.m. This just-for-fun walk is appropriate for all fitness levels, and all participants receive a walking kit from Community Medical Center. Choose your own distance, walk at your own pace, and learn why a walk in the park is good medicine. Visit www.missoulaparks.org or phone 721-PARK for more information.

Getting patients to increase their physical activity could soon be a walk in the park for Missoula physicians, with the opening of Missoula's first "Prescription Trail" at Fort Missoula Regional Park.

Missoula Parks and Recreation and Community Medical Center (CMC) have partnered with Montana State Parks to create a Prescription Trail on Fort Missoula's walking paths. CMC medical professionals can now prescribe a walking regimen in the park to help treat or prevent a number of chronic diseases like diabetes, heart disease, obesity and hypertension. Residents are invited to learn more at the "Prescription For Fun" walk on Saturday, September 28, at 9 a.m. at Fort Missoula Park.

This free, non-competitive event is appropriate for all fitness levels and is a great introduction to the Prescription Trail. Participants will receive a Prescription Trail kit from CMC, including trail maps and a pedometer, water bottle and walking tips. Walkers may complete the distance of their choice, according to their fitness level. The walk is hosted by Parks and Recreation, CMC and Run Wild Missoula.

Parks and Recreation Director Donna Gaukler says "park prescriptions" are a great way for people to increase physical activity and improve their health. "Public health research has shown that exercise in a park setting offers significant benefits," Gaukler said. "For instance, studies have shown that exercising in nature reduces stress and improves well-being, helps people stick to their exercise regimens, and can result in more time engaged in moderate-to-vigorous exercise. Parks and trails offer the perfect solution for those wanting to increase their physical activity and reap the many benefits of spending time in nature." Gaukler says the department is eager to work with health care providers throughout the area to designate more Prescription Trails in Missoula.

Missoula's Prescription Trail is part of a statewide network known as [Montana Trails Rx](#). A program of Montana State Parks and Bike Walk Montana, Trails Rx seeks to connect local medical providers and their patients with parks and trails throughout the state. "[Park Prescriptions](#)" and "[Exercise Is Medicine](#)" are national movements to strengthen connections between the healthcare system, physical activity and public lands.

Prescription For Fun walkers should sign in at the Fort Missoula Park picnic shelter between 8 a.m. and 9 a.m. on Saturday. The shelter is located south of the CMC campus, off of Old Fort Road, near Fort Missoula's tennis courts. The Prescription For Fun walk is part of Missoula's [National Public Lands Day celebration](#) at Fort Missoula. For more information, phone 721-PARK, or visit www.missoulaparks.org.

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