



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The City of Hailey in conjunction with the BLM Shoshone Field Office and Wood River Land Trust are implementing a no-dog restriction for the uphill activities in Red Devil/Hangman/Quigley/Cutter hillsides and Olympia Gulch immediately East of the Woodside neighborhood. Dog walkers can continue to use the Quigley Road, the northern section of the Quigley loop trail, the flat trails at the base of the hills in Cutters and the Woodside Toe-Of-The-Hill trail. The restriction is intended to minimize impacts to wintering deer and elk beginning immediately and will remain in effect until further notice. Signs have been posted at all main access points.

Winter is difficult on wildlife and recreating with dogs: dogs off-leash in particular can increase stress on deer and elk. Dogs resemble a coyote or wolf, both of which have been natural predators of deer and elk for thousands of years. Restricting dogs from hillsides is a first step in protecting wildlife from human and dog disturbances.

All forms of winter recreation can disturb deer and elk, displacing or preventing them from using critical winter range habitats, which are typically south-facing slopes throughout the Wood River Valley. Deer and elk must minimize expending their stored energy reserves in winter because of reduced available habitat, especially high-quality food. Therefore, in addition to the no-dog restriction, user etiquette signs have also been posted reminding people to look before you go. If you see deer or elk in the area you intend to go, you should not continue. Even human presence can startle wildlife therefore all recreationists need to consider their potential impacts to deer and elk and adjust their plans accordingly to minimize impacts.

The Cities and County would like to encourage residents when walking dogs to keep them on a leash. There are many deer and elk within neighborhoods, subdivisions and along the bike path. This will reduce the chances of dogs chasing deer and elk through neighborhoods and parks. Blaine County encourages everyone to report wildlife sightings using this website, <https://bit.ly/3ERZlbs>. It will help inform management actions that keep residents and their pets safe.

This is a community-wide effort, dog walkers, hikers, snowshoers, backcountry skiers can all impact wildlife, and wildlife need our help. If winter conditions and associated human activity continue to stress wildlife human entry closures could be possible. Therefore, we encourage recreationists to take responsibility for their actions and follow the posted recommendations, be part of the solution as we try to balance recreation opportunities and human-wildlife conflicts.

For additional information see the wildlife smart communities website, <https://wrvwildlifsmart.org/seasonal-restrictions-for-wildlife/> or contact BLM Outdoor Recreation Planner John Kurtz at 208-732-7296, City of Hailey Community Development Director Lisa Horowitz at 208-788-9815 or Wood River Land Trust Lands Program Manager Keri York at 208-788-3947.

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