



Edward Stratton/The Daily Astorian

Fireworks light the night sky over the Columbia River.

Fourth: 'We appreciate all the help we can get'

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In Warrenton

Warrenton Police will adjust normal hours to have three officers working two 12-hour shifts. In addition, four officers were scheduled to work a short shift from 2 to 5 p.m. to cover traffic control and security at the city's holiday parade.

Most of Warrenton's issues on Fourth of July either come in the form of illegal firework use or disturbances due to alcohol consumption, Police Chief Mathew Workman said. Other than the relatively family-friendly parade, people in the city typically don't congregate in one area.

"In my nine years here, I've seen Fourth of Julys be very quiet," Workman said. "It sometimes can be very difficult to locate problem areas."

Workman said those wishing to report illegal firework use should call the department's main phone number rather than 911 emergency line.

State parks

Last year, state park rangers began focusing more keenly on trash and safety issues.

Two rangers will patrol state beaches and parks from Fort Stevens to Gearhart and parts of Seaside through the holiday rush. A Sheriff's Office deputy will also patrol those areas at all times, along with some additional help from Oregon State Police.

Trash and other debris also tend to gather in locations on beaches and parks around the holiday. Sunset, Del Ray and Gearhart beaches have been affected most acutely, Ranger Ken Murphy said.

"There are so many people out there," Murphy said. "We really want people to respect each other and recreate responsibly."

Visitors will receive garbage bags and can dispose of them at various dumpster sites. Murphy also warns visitors to prevent fire emergencies by keeping away from dune grass and upland properties and by removing wood from burning campfires.

People from multiple local organizations will traverse these areas Wednesday to get rid of any leftover trash. All residents are welcome to join the effort, as well, Murphy said.

"We appreciate all the help we can get," he said.

Port: Judge will take Guess' comments under advisement

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sued the Port in November 2015 after the agency instead went with Astoria Hospitality Ventures, owned by William Orr, former Port Commissioner Stephen Fulton's brother-in-law.

Param claimed the Port breached a previous agreement and showed bias toward the locally connected company. The company seeks monetary damages, as well as the lease for the hotel. A trial between Param and the Port is scheduled for October.

Although Param's attorney has no standing in the Port's case against Smithart, McIntosh said, it makes sense to wait on any judgment with Smithart until after

the Param trial. She asked Andrew Guess, an attorney with Portland firm Jordan Ramis PC representing the Port, if he had any strenuous objections.

Guess argued that while a judgment in Param's case could make the Port's claims against Smithart moot, it doesn't affect the procedure. He argued that Smithart had already admitted to not paying rent and has not specifically denied any of the other facts in the Port's other claims.

McIntosh said she would take Guess' comments under advisement, but that the Port shouldn't expect any judgment in the case until after the trial between Param and the Port.

Harsh winter took heavy toll on wildlife across western US

One of the coldest and snowiest

By BOB MOEN
Associated Press

CHEYENNE, Wyo. — Wildlife suffered higher than normal losses this winter in severe weather across the western United States, where the toll included the deaths of all known fawns in one Wyoming deer herd and dozens of endangered bighorn sheep in California.

Wildlife managers in Colorado, Utah, Idaho, Oregon and Washington state also reported higher losses of animals in the wake of one of the coldest and snowiest winters in decades. Parts of the Rockies saw snowfall as late as mid-June.

"This year we kind of had all the factors that we don't want — we had deep snow, we had periods of fairly cold weather, subzero, and then we also had some crusting on top of that snow," said Roger Phillips, spokesman for the Idaho Fish and Game Department.

Wildlife managers have been assessing the damage using radio collars and surveys of herds following a winter in which many parts of the West recorded record snowfall, including places where deer, pronghorn antelope and elk migrate each fall to escape the harsher mountain winters. Prolonged snow cover on winter grounds made it difficult for wildlife to find food, and spells of bitter cold made matters worse for the weakened animals by hardening the snow.

Mule deer in several Rocky Mountain states and elk in eastern Washington were hit hard. Wyoming was expecting above-normal losses among antelope as well, although it didn't have an accurate accounting yet.

Wyoming last saw comparable wildlife deaths over three decades ago, said Bob Lanka,



Keith Kohl/Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

Elk feed at the Wenaha Wildlife Area near Troy. Wildlife managers in seven states, including Oregon, in the U.S. West report severe weather this past winter was rough on wildlife.

supervisor of statewide wildlife and habitat management program with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department.

"It's been a long, long time since we experienced this kind of loss," he said.

'Rivers of moisture'

Meteorologist David Lipson of the National Weather Service in Riverton blamed the rough winter on "unusually strong rivers of moisture" flowing into the West from the Pacific Ocean, where a weak and unusually short-lived La Niña occurred.

In California, the Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep, which is listed as an endangered species, lost an estimated 40 to 60 animals.

"We're not including any predation or normal mortality or any other kind of losses; that's just from the snow, from getting trapped up in the snow and not having food, some of them starving and then some of them directly impacted by avalanches," said Jason Holley, supervising wildlife biologist with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Montana wildlife was spared the deadly conditions seen in neighboring states, according to Ken McDonald, wildlife division administrator with the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Department.

Nevada saw near average wildlife losses statewide, while a few isolated areas in the northeast part of the state had slightly higher than average mortality, said Tom Donham, a Nevada Department of Wildlife biologist.

Fewer hunting permits

Wildlife managers are responding by reducing hunting permits in the hard-hit areas.

"There will be less hunting opportunity this coming fall for sure, and the people that do get a license, whether it's a general license or a limited quota tag, I don't think there's going to be any doubt they're going to notice less animals on the landscape," Lanka said.

Mike Clark, owner of

Greys River Outfitters in western Wyoming, said the loss of mule deer and antelope tags will be hard on his business, which includes deer, antelope and elk hunts.

"Luckily, we can still work with some elk," Clark said.

However, outfitters have to be careful not to overhunt elk and overload their fall hunting camps with too many hunters to make up for the decline in deer hunting, he said.

"It just takes away from the quality of the hunt if you got too many hunters in camp," Clark said.

Biologists say the wildlife herds eventually should recover with the help of reduced hunting and a return to at least normal weather conditions next winter. However, forecasters say it's too early to predict how next winter will play out.

"What happens in the future depends a lot on what kind of winter we see next year," Phillips said. "If we have back-to-back hard winters, it could be tough."

Seaside: 'Exciting to see this finally happening'

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In November, Seaside voters passed a \$99.7 million bond to solve the problem.

The bond came three years after a failed \$128.8 million plan. The scaled-back proposal eliminated an auditorium, covered bleachers, long-term emergency shelters and a varsity playing field.

Advocates of the new proposal, including the Vote Yes For Our Local Schools group, presented a sustained campaign to promote the bond, which they said was necessary, not only for the safety of the students, but also because of the condition of the schools. Gearhart Elementary School, Broadway Middle School and Seaside High School were built with expected lifespans of 45 to 50 years. Each has been used beyond that span.

With Weyerhaeuser's land gift of 80 acres in the East Hills, along with favorable interest rates and a likelihood of limited matching funds from the state, proponents said "this was the best time" to pass the bond.

Making it stable

Only about 8 more acres of school district-owned property



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Seaside School Board members recently toured the school construction site that is still in the process of being logged.

are left to be logged, which will eliminate the wooded barrier between Seaside Heights Elementary and the rest of the campus property. The rest of the unlogged property will serve as buffers for surrounding streams, Seaside School District Superintendent-emeritus Doug Dougherty said.

Now that the trees have been cleared, the district has a

clearer picture of what the land actually looks like and can proceed with more detailed architectural designs. Over the summer, soil surveys will be conducted to illuminate smaller slopes and contours of the hillside, which will help guide building stabilization techniques, Dougherty said.

While building into a hillside will be a challenge,

Dougherty said the inclinometer — an 80-foot underground sensor that monitors slide activity — showed no evidence of landslides in this section of the hillside in four years.

"I'm excited for each stage of this process. I've been working on this for 25 years, and it is exciting to see this finally happening," Dougherty said.

Commissioners: 'Hopefully this will be a better year with a lot of stability'

Port of Astoria Commissioner Frank Spence, right, takes the oath of office Monday with Clatsop County Sheriff Tom Bergin.



Colin Murphey
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to hopefully being part of the solution and working with the Port staff and creating an environment of stability and hopefully productivity," he said.

Campbell, who served on the Port Commission in 1960s and '70s before being re-elected in 2012 and again in May, began his fifth term as a commissioner Monday. He recognized the voters who united behind him and

Spence and Rohne over an alliance led by former Commissioner Stephen Fulton.

"Hopefully this will be a better year with a lot of stability and teamwork, and a lot of cooperation," Campbell said.

Port Executive Director Jim Knight, who had faced withering criticism from Fulton and Hunsinger but general support from Raichl, Campbell and Mushen, said the election results and new

Port commissioners truly seem like a new beginning for the Port.

"Honest to God, I would do the whole thing all over again," he said. "It's this important to our community that ... the leadership of the Port create for our community what a port can do, and that is truly to be the economic generator that we've always destined to be but have not quite accomplished. Now I see the hope that we can do this."