



Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

Angela Cosby, the Astoria parks director, is leaving for a job in Colorado.

## Astoria parks director to leave for job in Steamboat Springs

Cosby led the department for five years

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ  
The Daily Astorian

Astoria is losing another department head.

Angela Cosby, the director of the Parks and Recreation Department, announced Thursday she is leaving the city to take a job as the parks and recreation director for Steamboat Springs, Colorado. Her last day is Aug. 15.

Jonah Dart-McLean, the parks maintenance supervisor, will take over as interim director.

"Astoria is a magical place and the community has left a profound impact on me personally and professionally," Cosby wrote in a letter to the Parks, Recreation and Community Foundation.

"While there's still work to be done and adjustments to be made, the department is in a more sustainable place than it has been in the past several decades."

Cosby's departure comes at a time when the city is still trying to fill two other department head positions: the fire chief and the community development director.

City Manager Brett Estes hopes to interview candidates for the posts in August as the search for a new parks director begins.

Cosby has worked as the city's parks and recreation director for the past five years, overseeing 36 parks as

well as multiple trails, historical sites, athletic fields, community programs, the Ocean View Cemetery in Warrenton, the Astoria Recreation Center and the Aquatic Center, among other duties.

The department weathered major shifts during her tenure, in particular a painful effort to represent the true costs of operations and establish sustainable funding sources. The city wrestled with various funding scenarios and cut programs during this time. The City Council ultimately approved an increase to the lodging tax to help provide a steadier source of income for parks.

In April, Cosby presented the first budget that matched the department's expenses with revenue and did not rely on transfers from the general fund to pencil out.

"We are grateful to Angela for her commitment and vision for the parks department," Estes said. "She has worked hard for her staff, and worked alongside the City Council and other city department staff to stabilize funding scenarios while finding creative ways to utilize our open spaces. The parks department is in a more sustainable place."

This year, Cosby focused on rebuilding and stabilizing the department's internal operations after a year of uncertainty, hiring on staff and streamlining processes. It is work Estes is confident will continue.

"The funding sources are in place and there's a good team on board to be able to take everything and run with it," he said.

## PORT ORFORD

# SEASON OF CRAB AND CRISIS

A fishing town tries to cope with disruption

By ARYA SUROWIDJOJO  
Oregon Public Broadcasting

Oregon's toxic algae troubles didn't begin with the summer bloom tainting Salem's water supply.

The opening salvo actually came from the wintry Pacific, where high levels of domoic acid — a neurotoxin byproduct of marine algae blooms — disrupted seafood production along Oregon's south coast.

For Port Orford in particular, where the fishing industry sustains about one-third of the local economy, this meant a season of loss instead of bounty.

By the numbers, Port Orford really can't afford more economic distress.

Data from the Oregon Department of Human Services in 2015 show that Port Orford lies in a poverty hot spot in what is an already depressed Curry County.

"You can feel it in the community, that sensation that there's a good portion of your neighbors that are struggling," said Port of Port Orford Commission President Tom Calvanese.

At the heart of the town's crisis this year was Dungeness crab.

According to the Oregon Dungeness Crab Commission, commercial fishermen up and down the state netted more than \$65 million for this native West Coast crab in 2017. In Port Orford, a town of just over 1,100 people, that value was almost \$1.5 million.

"It's kind of our ticket," Calvanese said. "There aren't a lot of other options. When your annual cycle includes this large influx of financing at a certain time of year and that doesn't happen, you start to hurt."

But the Pacific Ocean is undergoing changes to its water chemistry: from widespread domoic acid events and ocean acidification to low-oxygen "dead zones" that are suffocating Dungeness crab in their habitat.



Arya Surowidjojo/Oregon Public Broadcasting

Port Orford fisherman Rodney Fisher tugs at the line to pull up one of his crab pots.

And these climatic phenomena directly impact coastal communities like Port Orford.

In November 2017, the waters from Coos Bay to the California border tested positive for "hot crab," or high levels of domoic acid in the Dungeness population. The state delayed the south coast's 2018 crabbing season, which normally kicks off Dec. 1.

"The crab concentrates that toxin in their tissues and they become toxic to us. So we can't eat the crab that have too much domoic acid in them," Calvanese said.

Port Orford's fishermen were finally given the green light to go crabbing in early February, but they had already missed the December-January window when the Dungeness stock is most abundant and most profitable.

This meant many in the community had to go without gifts under the Christmas tree, like fisherman Steve Shelton.

"I didn't have a Christmas. We couldn't do anything else — because this town, its Christmas is crab," Shelton said. "There's a few hundred people that work on that dock that are dealing around crab."

The 2018 Dungeness crab season delay was a window into the volatility of the Oregon Coast's fishing economy.

On the flip side, the months following the actual open

demonstrated coastal resilience in action — when Port Orford fishermen stormed the ocean to regain their losses.

"Some of us hadn't worked for three or four months before that. So it's hard to prepare for those times when you're not ready for it," said Rodney Fisher, a Port Orford seaman of 20 years.

**'It's kind of our ticket. There aren't a lot of other options.'**

Tom Calvanese  
Port of Port Orford  
commission president

That urgency showed, even as late as May.

On deck, Fisher was a dynamo: all sinews and explosive movement.

With his boat steadily running at 3 knots, he jabbed at the water with a hooked pole and yanked up a line, which was quickly fed through a motorized pulley called a "crab block." A loud whir and the block pulled up a potful of Dungeness crab.

"Then I'll drive to my next crab pot and I'll buoy up the next one, and we just run through 40 to 50 pots at a

time, until I get through all my gear," Fisher said.

At the same time that Port Orford fishermen are persevering, they're also exploring other ways of making a living.

"Fishermen are leading the way," said Calvanese. "Just, for example, we have a local fisherman who has gone into the business of cultivating an edible seaweed called 'dulse.'"

Port-side farming may be a less thrilling alternative to the high seas, but there are good incentives for growing dulse: It tastes like bacon and a recent analysis predicted the global seaweed market to reach over \$20 billion by 2023.

At any given time, dulse farmer James Weimar cultivates up to 700 pounds of the stuff, which supports about 100 pounds of production each week. Currently selling at about \$10 per pound, fresh dulse is relatively on par with the retail value for whole Dungeness crab — which slides between \$6 to \$12 per pound throughout the season.

And although Weimar has to constantly "weed" out unwanted growth from the dulse crop, his company can grow dulse in seawater tanks year-round — unlike seasonal catch like crab.

When it's slim pickings in the ocean, that just means more options for a fishing town looking to stay above water.

## Oregon schools promised support, not sanctions, under state guidance

School districts will take the lead

By ROB MANNING  
Oregon Public Broadcasting

Oregon will have an entirely different system for judging schools this fall, based on support, rather than penalties.

For years, schools across the country faced sanctions if their test scores failed to reach specific federal targets, known as adequate yearly progress. Year-by-year, targets under the federal No Child Left Behind law got higher, as sanctions got tougher for schools with low scores.

In recent years, though, federal education officials moved in another direction — first, by granting waivers from aspects of the law, and then in late 2015, with congressional passage of the new Every Student Succeeds law.

Now, punitive measures are largely gone. The focus is on supporting schools, based on their local needs.

Oregon schools will be judged on a number of measures. Some are familiar — like standardized test scores and high schools' four-year graduation rates. Others are new accountability metrics — like tracking students who are chronically absent, whether ninth graders are earning enough credits to graduate on time and five-year graduation rates.

Schools that are low on several measures will be labeled as needing "comprehensive" support. Schools where just certain student groups are struggling will get "targeted support." High schools with

low graduation rates will get support designations, too.

In new guidance from the state, school districts are identified as the leaders of the improvement efforts, rather than individual schools.

"This new plan recognizes individual schools as part of a larger district system," said Oregon Department of Education in a statement to Oregon Public Broadcasting. "Moving

forward, districts will be the point of contact for identified schools."

That's a change from the state's previous accountability systems where government regulators worked directly with school-level administrators.

The new guidance highlights the importance of local data and context. Conditions at schools that need help will be at the center of needs

assessments and "continuous improvement plans." The Department of Education will provide technical assistance to all districts, but the state

agency is offering additional help to districts with multiple schools in need of support.

A list of affected schools is due out in October.

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