

# FORT WORDEN STRATEGIC MARKETING PLAN

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## Location and Facilities

### **FORT WORDEN STATE PARK**

Fort Worden is a 434-acre state park in Port Townsend, Washington, on the northeast coast of the Olympic Peninsula, two hours from Seattle via auto and ferry. It was an army fort at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when most of the 70-plus now historic buildings were built. At the center of the Fort is the campus-like setting of a parade ground surrounded by white-washed buildings used for housing and meeting spaces. The property consists of 90 acres, with the remaining 344 acres devoted to upland and beachfront campgrounds, a wooded hill laced with trails and old bunkers, sand beaches on the Puget Sound, and a large lagoon. After the army base was decommissioned it served as a juvenile detention center and then, in 1973, became a state park and conference center with a special focus on arts education. Fort Worden has become Washington's iconic state park and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Today Fort Worden is a comprehensive multiple-use facility. The campus has a variety of accommodations in historic buildings both large and small. Included are military housing (one-, two- and three-bedroom units), larger semi-private Officer's Row housing options (four-, five-, six- and 11-bedroom units), former military barracks that provide dozens of single-room dormitories (with shared bathrooms), and more open barracks (bunk-style) for large groups. The accommodations comprise 456 beds in 393 rentable units. Food services feature a state-of-the-art dining hall with many room variations and a large commercial kitchen that can serve up to 500 guests. Guest services include a laundromat, maintenance and janitorial essentials, and grounds-keeping.

Many buildings are leased to 15 tenants (known as "partners"), most of whom are non-profits that provide classes, workshops and performances in a variety of arts, education and trades. The campus also houses a variety of meeting rooms, classrooms and performance halls, including a chapel used for weddings and meetings, a 300-seat theater and a renovated blimp hangar transformed into a 1,200-seat performance hall. More than 56,000 square feet of meeting room facilities is available on the campus.

### **PORT TOWNSEND**

Fort Worden occupies a dramatically beautiful coastal corner of the Victorian seaport city of Port Townsend. Port Townsend is known worldwide as a place of living history; its Victorian-style commercial district and uptown housing district were constructed primarily in the late 1880s and 1890s in anticipation of becoming the western terminal of cross-country railroads. Although the railroad did not come, the city's buildings have been immaculately preserved and the entire commercial district is so intact today that it has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Today Port Townsend's thriving commercial district is occupied by locally-owned businesses devoted to high quality, eclectic and household items, artwork, soft goods and professional services. The uptown Victorian homes are private residences; some have been converted to bed and breakfast inns.

Thanks to its permanent link to Fort Worden, Port Townsend has become known in recent decades

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as a magnet for artists, for performances and performers, and as a vibrant small seaside city. The city's personality is completed by a devotion to wooden boats and the marine trades, two large marinas, an industrial base built on the manufacture of paper (primarily using recycled materials), a strong tourism economy and the arrival of small technology companies that have located in Port Townsend for quality-of-life reasons.

## Situation Overview

From 1973 until May 1, 2014, Fort Worden has been managed by the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission as a state park and cultural center. The non-profit organization Centrum was established in conjunction with Fort Worden, also in 1973 (by the Parks Commission, the Washington State Arts Commission and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction), to independently develop the Fort's art and cultural programming. Other similar sites (such as Fort Baker and Fort Mason in California, Jekyll Island in Georgia, and Fort Vancouver in Washington) operate under somewhat different management models.

### **FORT WORDEN PUBLIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (FWPDA)**

In 2008 the Parks Commission began implementing the recommendations included in an externally-developed Fort Worden business and operating plan. These recommendations focused on establishing the Fort as a center of lifelong learning for arts, culture and education. The funding required to achieve this goal was reliant upon an annual state subsidy, and as the 2008 recession continued to deepen, this resource was repeatedly cut back. In 2011 the Commission began exploring the idea of a management partnership, and late that year the Fort Worden Public Development Authority (FWPDA) was created by the City of Port Townsend.

In 2012 another business and management plan was completed, this one designed to evaluate "the financial viability of a management partnership between the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission and the Fort Worden Public Development Authority." Based on the plan's findings and recommendations, in August 2013 the Commission approved a lease agreement turning over management of the 75-building Fort Worden campus area to the FWPDA, effective May 1, 2014. The Parks Commission retained management of the park's campgrounds and nature trails.

### **PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS**

There are 15 nonprofits and businesses located on the Fort Worden campus that support the mission of lifelong learning by providing a broad array of arts, education and heritage programs and services. The programming offered by these partners distinguishes the Fort from other state parks and plays a significant role in drawing visitors (especially in the summer months), many of whom book overnight lodgings. Analysis has shown that partner organizations contribute more than \$850,000 annually to Fort Worden (these are revenues paid by partners to State Parks, not revenues received directly by partners).

As the Fort's oldest and largest partner, Centrum is the anchor tenant offering a year-round calendar of arts and culture-based events. In June and July each year Centrum offers a series of festivals (Port Townsend Music Festival, Festival of American Fiddle Tunes, Jazz Port Townsend, Port Townsend Acoustic Blues Festival) and conferences (Voice Works, Port Townsend Writers' Conference) that attracts thousands of people. Other partners such as Goddard College, the School of Woodworking, Madrona MindBody Institute and the Marine Science Center have workshops and classes that bring in students and smaller groups.

In addition to onsite partners, a number of government agencies are also important stakeholders involved in Fort Worden's ultimate success. First and foremost is the critical and innovative partnership between Washington State Parks and the FWPDA. The Washington state legislature and the governor's office are closely monitoring this partnership as a potential model for other state agencies. The City of Port Townsend considers the Fort an integral part of the community, provides

marketing support through the city’s website, and has provided financial support for this plan. Jefferson County values the influx of visitors – and their positive impact on local businesses – that occurs due to events at Fort Worden. The Port of Port Townsend and Northwest Maritime Center are focused on strengthening the city’s maritime industries through increased vocational offerings, and consider accommodations at the Fort critical to supporting their educational and training needs.

**MANAGEMENT GOALS**

As the entity responsible for managing Fort Worden’s campus area, the FWPDA must meet specific goals outlined by State Parks. These goals define annual revenue requirements, including ongoing sale of the Discover Pass. The FWPDA is also expected to significantly expand the Fort’s reputation as a place of lifelong learning in arts, culture and education. Increasing the number of partners housed on the grounds of the Fort and implementing compelling marketing strategies will assist in meeting this expectation.

## Plan Purpose

The purpose of any strategic marketing plan is to provide a roadmap for achieving clearly defined goals, strengthening an organization's mission, addressing current or upcoming issues, or even identifying those goals and issues. The plan for Fort Worden is both goals-based and issues-based. This integrated approach aims to help Fort Worden achieve goals of increased revenue from overnight stays, a stronger brand identity, and expanded arts, culture and educational programming. It also examines issues that may impede the achievement of these goals and offers solutions to overcome such challenges.

The strategic plan for Fort Worden addresses two distinct needs:

1. **Short-term need.** Increase use of the Fort by (a) groups holding meetings and conferences during shoulder seasons and (b) independent travelers who come to the Fort year-round.
2. **Long-term need.** Fulfill the vision of Fort Worden as a center of lifelong learning by (a) expanding the programming of existing partners into shoulder seasons, and (b) securing new partner organizations that bring additional programs to these same low-volume months.

The best marketing plans strike a balance between strategies and tactics that are both aspirational and realistic. Stretching to allocate the resources and energy required to implement a specific tactic can strengthen an organization. However, struggling and failing to deliver on an unrealistic or impractical strategy is inefficient and disheartening; pursuing such a course can sap vital momentum. Fort Worden's strategic marketing plan has been designed to maximize the possible and minimize the unattainable.

Fort Worden's strategic marketing plan will also build greater collaboration among partner organizations and stakeholders, creating a stronger sense of team. The Fort's partners and stakeholders span a broad range of creative disciplines. This type of diversity often brings a rich variety of ideas that generate new, inventive thinking. It may also present challenges related to prioritization and resource allocation. For this reason, the strategic marketing plan's ability to foster teamwork is especially important.

As a cohesive team, Fort Worden will achieve far more than the sum total of efforts by individual partners and/or stakeholders. A strong brand and key messages that support it are examples of how the marketing plan will help unify the diverse group involved in Fort Worden's success. The group has recognized the need for such tools to promote higher awareness that leads to increased revenue and a stronger connection to the greater Port Townsend community. The plan addresses these needs.

## Market Overview

### CITY OF PORT TOWNSEND

Established in 1851, the City of Port Townsend sits on the northeast tip of the Olympic Peninsula – a 19<sup>th</sup> century seaport surrounded on three sides by the waters of Discovery Bay, the Strait of Juan de Fuca and Port Townsend Bay. The only incorporated city in Jefferson County, Port Townsend has a population of around 10,000. Economic drivers include the local paper mill, Port Townsend Paper, and small to mid-sized businesses based in maritime, timber and manufacturing. Substantial public sector employers (Jefferson Healthcare, Jefferson County, the City of Port Townsend, four school districts, etc.) provide a hedge against recessionary times. The city's thriving arts scene and collection of architecturally-significant Victorian buildings help support a healthy tourism trade. Port Townsend is a tight-knit community with both year-round and seasonal residents who take pride in the city's history and cultural heritage.

Because of its location, Port Townsend is considered a destination. There is little chance for the city to capitalize on drive-through traffic (limited opportunities with ferry traffic passing through Port Townsend en route to Olympic National Park, Port Angeles, Victoria, etc.). While the location is not a huge obstacle for leisure travelers, meeting and group planners see the city as difficult to access. They regard the logistics of moving large numbers of people from SeaTac Airport (or other points in the Seattle metro area) to Port Townsend as a significant barrier. This, along with limited lodging options for groups, is a challenge faced by both the city and Fort Worden. A detailed report examining Port Townsend's ability to capture and retain group/meeting business was produced in May 2013. Fort Worden must deal with the same perception of limited access identified in this report as one of Port Townsend's primary challenges.

### PORT TOWNSEND'S PERCEPTION OF FORT WORDEN

The HVS 2013 group/meeting report recognized the city's opportunity to increase conference business through improved accommodations. Port Townsend does not currently have any hotels with more than 63 rooms. City leaders see Fort Worden as the solution, since the Fort has plans to upgrade and greatly expand guestroom product in the near future.

People who live in Port Townsend have mixed feelings about the Fort. They consider it their own park, and are proud of its rich history. The annual Centrum events have helped put Port Townsend on the map (the city has done an equally fine job with its yearly Wooden Boat Festival, et al), and there is satisfaction in the lingering fame from the filming of *An Officer and a Gentleman*. Residents also grumble about traffic congestion when hundreds of people descend on the city. Businesses would like more consistent advance warning about groups and meetings so they can staff and market themselves accordingly. Although those who live in Port Townsend and those who work at Fort Worden seem genuinely respectful of one another, there is an undertone of the "town" and "gown" distinction often found in university communities where non-academics (town) consider themselves separate from the academic population (gown).

Many of Port Townsend's community leaders consider Fort Worden an integral part of the city. In spite of this, little can be found about Fort Worden on the city's website or on the city's related EnjoyPT.com website, or on the local PTguide.com site. A review of links brought up by a simple "Port Townsend, WA" Google search revealed similar findings at the time of this plan's creation. The city is consistently described as historic and well-known for Victorian buildings, arts and cultural events and its maritime roots. Fort Worden is often not mentioned at all, or only in an offhand way. For Port Townsend and

Fort Worden to maximize the strengths each brings to the table, there is a need for enhanced collaborative marketing. Creating a new brand for Fort Worden is an important first step.

## Industry Analysis

Fort Worden has been operated as a state park since 1973. Beginning on May 1, 2014, the FWPDA will be responsible for the management and operation of the 90-acre campus portion of the park. State Parks will continue to manage the other 240 acres of trails, beaches, campgrounds and natural areas. Under management by the FWPDA the property will focus on improving hospitality customer service and developing and coordinating new programs, events and activities. This is a significant change that requires an equally significant shift in the way all stakeholders think about and position the Fort. The expectations target audiences have when they visit a park are vastly different from what they anticipate when attending a conference or booking weekend lodging. Understanding these differences will be an important step in establishing Fort Worden as a viable competitor in the Northwest and carving out a unique tourism niche.

Enhancing Fort Worden's position as a multi-faceted destination requires the development of updated lodgings and amenities, and a structured customer service system. These issues are being addressed by the FWPDA's newly established hospitality division. The strategies presented in this marketing plan focus primarily on Fort Worden's opportunities within the events industry. Events are typically broken into three sectors, based on content: (1) meetings/conferences/expos, (2) cultural/arts/music, and (3) sports and recreation. Because most revenue-producing sports events don't align well with the Fort's grounds, the sector is only briefly touched on in this analysis.

### MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES

The 2012 PROS business and management plan shows conference attendance at the Fort has declined steadily for the last 10 years. In 2011, conference attendance was 31 percent lower than in 2002. Part of this can be explained by significant cutbacks in state hospitality staffing and virtually no marketing of the Fort's facilities and lodging. Another factor may be the recession and weak travel industry. The lack of technology and Internet connectivity at the Fort may also be contributing, as virtually all business or business-related meeting attendees expect Internet access. Even non-business event planners may think twice about the lack of online access.

Fort Worden's meeting/group business has been largely dependent upon the SMERFE (sport, military, education, religious, fraternal, ethnic) category. SMERFEs tend to be less reactive to changes in the economy, hosting meetings and conferences in good times and bad. Because their members have other commitments, meetings are generally planned for weekends and during shoulder seasons. SMERFE groups can be small (fewer than 100 attendees) to quite large (thousands). A family-friendly destination is often appealing, as many members combine meetings with family vacations. SMERFEs are, however, very price sensitive, as their members generally pay their own expenses instead of having these costs covered by an employer. Competition for SMERFE business has become quite fierce. There are numerous SMERFE organizations within the Seattle metro area (Fort Worden's primary feeder market), although many may be unaware of the Fort's ability to host meetings.

Professional associations, government agencies and corporations/businesses also significantly contribute to the events industry. Professional associations in particular have chosen Port Townsend as a location for meetings. The improved economy will open opportunities for increased meetings and conferences by professional associations as more companies renew or expand their memberships. Most government agencies continue to deal with reduced budgets and funding for off-site meetings will likely be limited in the immediate future. Although corporate/business meeting demand will ramp up due to economic growth, the needs of this group don't align well with Fort Worden's current lodging



product offerings, i.e., large vacation homes which currently cater to SMERFE groups where people know one another.

### **ARTS AND EDUCATIONAL GATHERINGS**

Festivals, concerts and cultural gatherings are a category of events that primarily market to individuals, including the leisure traveler. The Centrum-produced arts events held at Fort Worden have delivered large numbers of visitors for many years. The Fort has a great opportunity to capitalize on this momentum. Industry-wide, the number of festivals has continued to grow throughout the United States, with attendance showing little impact from the recession. Every state in the union now offers at least one annual festival. The City of Seattle lists almost 100 annual arts-related festivals occurring in the city alone. The Seattle metro area is home to dozens of nonprofits devoted to a broad range of arts and cultural interests: theaters, museums, symphonies, operas, film, dance, literature, poetry, woodworking, glass-blowing and many other disciplines. As a feeder market for Fort Worden, the abiding passion for the arts demonstrated by Seattle residents (and tourists) is a clear indication of untapped revenue.

The 2008 long-range development plan prepared for Fort Worden by PROS Consulting and BCRA found that “there is substantial opportunity for growth of the kinds of programs and associated revenues envisioned by the Lifelong Learning Center, with the bulk of the participation to be drawn from the Pacific Northwest.” Nationwide there are many signs of growing interest in and demand for arts and culture education programming. Increased use of creative placemaking is one key indicator.

Like many communities across the country (including Ashland, Oregon; Branson, Missouri; Arnaudville, Louisiana; and Asheville, North Carolina), Fort Worden is using a creative placemaking strategy to build a lifelong learning center for art, culture and education. The National Endowment for the Arts released the report “Creative Placemaking” by Ann Markusen and Anne Gadwa, revealing that developing these rich and diverse centers has been very successful in attracting regional, national and even international visitors: “a place without a distinctive cultural aura is much less apt to land on visitors’ itineraries than those with such amenities.”

Arts and culture are also benefiting from a renewed emphasis on arts education and empirical evidence of the arts’ economic impact. An article in *The Washington Post* reported that many arts organizations are allocating larger percentages of their budget to arts education, based on a growing belief in the power of the arts to motivate and engage. And in December 2013 the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis and the National Endowment for the Arts released estimates showing the arts and culture sector’s contributions to the 2011 gross domestic product was 3.2 percent – greater than the estimated value of the travel and tourism industry (2.8 percent). Of note: arts education contributed the second largest share at \$104 billion.

### **WEDDINGS**

Weddings are another category in the events industry. Destination weddings are on the rise (a recent study by TheKnot.com and TheWeddingChannel.com revealed that one in four couples choose a destination wedding, up from one in five), special and intimate locations are desirable, and weddings of this type generally last several days. Weddings represent a viable revenue source, especially with a combined effort by Fort Worden and Port Townsend. As with SMERFE meetings, companies, organizations and communities of many kinds compete for wedding business.

### **SPORTS AND RECREATION**

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Sports is the third category comprising the events industry. Although the youth sports market has experienced rapid growth in recent years (research by ESPN and Don Sabo, a youth sports researcher, reveals that 21 to 28 million kids between the ages of six and 17 play on competitive sports teams), the grounds at Fort Worden are not well-suited for soccer, football and other popular games. There may be opportunities with less traditional sports such as ultimate Frisbee, la crosse, petanque, etc., but the revenue potential with these activities is unknown.

## Mission and Vision

### MISSION STATEMENT

Fort Worden's mission statement defines its purpose and reason for existence. It's important to note that the mission of the Fort is not the same as that of the FWPDA.

*(Two versions of both mission and vision statement are presented below for review/discussion with the marketing committee.)*

#### Option 1

Fort Worden's mission is to enrich the lives of all who visit, whether for hours or days, through singular experiences with assets that include, but are not limited to, arts and culture, education, history and the natural environment.

or

#### Option 2

Fort Worden is unique in the Northwest as a gathering place for independent travelers and groups who benefit from a mix of its historical setting, nature and cultural enrichment.

### VISION STATEMENT

The vision statement for Fort Worden is an aspirational description of how the Fort will be perceived in the future.

#### Option 1

Fort Worden is recognized as Washington state's greatest source of exciting arts, culture and education events and programming. The Fort's rich history and stunning natural beauty propel its reputation as an inspirational gathering place beyond state boundaries to attract visitors from across the nation.

or

#### Option 2

Fort Worden is an historic gathering place in a singularly sublime natural setting of beaches, forests and century-old military buildings. All who come will be enriched and renewed by the place, the arts and cultural offerings, the welcoming and professional hospitality services.

## Audiences

Fort Worden's target audiences fall into two broad categories: (1) individual leisure travelers and (2) groups seeking a location to hold meetings, conferences or events.

### INDIVIDUAL LEISURE TRAVELERS

The 2008 long range development plan prepared for Fort Worden by PROS Consulting and BCRA described the individual leisure travelers audience as follows:

- Individuals and families
- Adults age 35-plus
- Household incomes of \$56,000-plus (adjusting for inflation puts this at approximately \$63,000 in 2014)
- Interested in arts and cultural events
- Interested in historic and cultural preservation
- Enjoy outdoor activities
- Support environmental advocacy

### GROUPS

#### **SMERFE**

This audience is comprised of sports, military, education, religious, fraternal and ethnic organizations. SMERFE groups are typically characterized by the following:

- Non-profit status
- Highly rate (cost) sensitive
- Tend to book in low or shoulder seasons, and/or on weekends
- Are comfortable in second and third tier accommodations
- Often include spouses or children, as meeting attendance is frequently combined with family vacations
- Large programs or events are typically handled by a meeting planner
- Participants are motivated by personal reasons to attend, versus being required to attend for business purposes

#### **Professional Associations, Government Agencies, Corporations**

Examples of professional associations include the American Marketing Association, Washington State Bar Association, Washington Society of Certified Public Accountants, etc. Government agencies and corporations cover a broad range of audience segments. These groups tend to share the following:

- Somewhat less rate-sensitive (especially corporations)
- Want easy access to the meeting location
- More likely to schedule meetings/events during weekdays in low or shoulder seasons
- Prefer and/or expect top-tier accommodations
- Require reliable technology, high-speed Internet and audio/visual equipment
- Place a high value on quality food and beverage service

### ***Weddings***

As a target audience, brides can be demanding and have elevated, sometimes unrealistic expectations about this very important life-changing event. Descriptors include:

- Often want all-in-one locations that include a site for the ceremony and for the reception
- Place a high value on personal attention
- Look for scenic backdrops and sites that support appealing wedding photography
- Tend to be cost-conscious

## Competitive Analysis

### LEISURE TRAVELER COMPETITION

Washington state is rife with places the leisure traveler can head to for a day, a weekend or longer. Within Fort Worden's feeder market – the Seattle metro area – are many parks, towns and communities that essentially compete for overnight business of the leisure traveler.

- **Crystal Mountain:** Skiing and snow sports during winter and spring months, hiking and horseback riding when temperatures climb. A number of hotels, lodges and dining options.
- **San Juan Islands:** Beaches and hiking trails, biking, kayaking, whale-watching, birding, shops featuring the work of many local artisans. Community events include a variety of theater and musical performances, as well as outdoor festivals. Many hotels, bed and breakfasts, and inns, along with restaurants.
- **Whidbey Island/Camano Island:** Year-round arts and heritage, beach and waterfront, outdoor, parks, and food, wine and boutique shopping opportunities. Seasonal events include arts and outdoor festivals. Many cottages and bed and breakfasts, some chain hotels (primarily in Oak Harbor), independent hotels, plenty of local restaurants.
- **Port Angeles:** Hiking and other outdoor recreation tied to Hurricane Ridge/Olympic National Park, coastal activities, seasonal events and festivals. Large selection of lodging options (chain and independent) and restaurants.

### GROUPS FOR MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES

The 2013 HVS study completed for the City of Port Townsend included an overview of three peer markets as a competitive assessment. It should be noted that the three markets were selected, at least in part, at the direction of City of Port Townsend staff that identified these jurisdictions as competitors. The study was conducted to evaluate regional meeting and group demand.

#### **Leavenworth**

Located in Chelan County, Leavenworth is 2.5 hours east of Seattle. The town is readily accessible by car except during snowy winter months when either of the two mountain passes leading to the city can become hazardous. Leavenworth has long marketed itself as a Bavarian town, and buildings, shops, products and events reflect this theme. Sleeping Lady Resort offers reasonable meeting facilities, and the town has a number of chain and independent hotels. Leavenworth is probably the most competitive with Fort Worden, especially for meetings and conferences, of the three markets reviewed.

#### **Gig Harbor**

Gig Harbor sits on the shores of Puget Sound, a suburban neighbor of Tacoma located across the Tacoma Narrows Bridge. The city's historic waterfront – for many years home to commercial fishermen and boat builders – is a popular tourist destination. Tourism is an economic driver in Gig Harbor. Limited lodging constrains the city's ability to grow meeting/conference business, although two of the three hotels in town do offer modest meeting facilities that are frequently booked. Gig Harbor is also an attractive wedding destination and the local chamber of commerce actively promotes this use.

#### **La Conner**

The third peer market included in the 2013 Port Townsend study is La Conner. Best known for the annual Skagit Valley tulip Festival that happens every spring, La Conner is a waterfront town of just 900 residents, located on the Salish Sea and almost 70 miles north of Seattle. Getting to La Conner is easy by car, not as easy by bus due to limited schedule options. The city promotes itself as “**the** Washington state weekend getaway destination” with a thriving arts community and endless boating opportunities. La Conner has just a few small inns that offer little to no meeting space.

### ***Ocean Shores***

Not included in the 2013 HVS study was the City of Ocean Shores. Ocean Shores is farther from Seattle than the other three markets (133 miles, about a two-hour drive), located in Grays Harbor County on the Point Brown Peninsula. Since 2006 the city has offered a 29,900 square foot conference center with state-of-the-art communications and audio visual equipment, capable of handling groups of 30 to 1,000. Lodging options are plentiful: more than 40 hotels and motels, including chains such as Best Western, Comfort Inn, Days Inn, and independent properties as well, together providing an estimated 1,200 rooms. Attractions in Ocean Shores are the miles of beaches, golf, casino gambling, canoeing and kayaking, and other beach/water activities. In spite of its slightly greater distance from the Seattle, the conference facility and lodging capacity make Ocean Shores a legitimate competitor in the destination meetings/conferences sector.

### **FORT WORDEN'S COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE**

Much of what Fort Worden offers – whether to target audiences in the meetings/groups sector or to independent leisure travelers – is available at other locations in the Puget Sound region. For example, many communities promote local artists and the chance to meet with and learn from these people. There are plenty of towns and buildings with fascinating histories. The region has a plethora of beautiful, naturally maintained parks and varied outdoor recreation opportunities. None of these things, taken individually, differentiates Fort Worden in the marketplace.

Rather, it is the confluence of these and other elements in one magnificent natural and historic setting that constitutes Fort Worden's key competitive advantage as an historic gathering place.

With high bluffs, stunning views and coastal beaches on three sides, this 434-acre sanctuary is laced with forest trails, wildlife, campgrounds and historic buildings and structures. Fort Worden's rich history and singular arts, culture and educational offerings reside in these serenely beautiful surroundings. Visitors enjoy well-appointed rooms with cutting edge technology, an attentive staff, and local sustainable foods. Just minutes away the stylish dining, shopping and arts galleries found in Port Townsend add to an experience found only at Fort Worden.

## SWOT Analysis

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>STRENGTHS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Location – water on three sides</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Historic buildings</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Program partners</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Trails, beaches, mountains</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Relationship with Port Townsend</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Vacation rentals</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meeting facilities</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The Commons</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bon Appetit (local, sustainable foods)</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wildlife</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Art and culture</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Programs</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> National Historic Landmark</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military history</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Weather</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pet-friendly</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>WEAKNESSES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Customer service</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lack of awareness</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lack of marketing</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deferred maintenance</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discover Pass</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not enough staff</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Inefficient reservation system</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Poor Internet connectivity</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Housing quality, quantity</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation to/from Port Townsend</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No brand identity</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Limited on-site food</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lack of accommodations for single travelers</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State park signage</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restaurant(s)</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New partners</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Proximity to Olympic National Park</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brunch, holiday meal packages</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Untapped lodging capacity</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic development</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brand</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Integrated partner marketing</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dive park</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tour providers – bikes, kayaks</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partners' passion</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Theater</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chapel</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> McCurdy Pavilion</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>THREATS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Politics and funding</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Utility costs</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Labor union</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Overall economy</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Newness of the FWPDA</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Revenue loss to capital expenses</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Premature decisions</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Failure to implement</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Incorrect brand</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Increased competition</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Myth of remoteness</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Traffic congestion</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff tension</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Weather (wind)</li> </ul>



## Key Messages

### 1. FORT WORDEN IS A HUB FOR ARTS, CULTURE AND EDUCATION IN THE NORTHWEST

- The 15 resident organizations at Fort Worden offer a variety of programs, events, workshops and classes throughout the year.
- Two accredited colleges offer graduate and two-year degrees and certificate programs.
- Other year-round programming includes music festivals, dance workshops, woodworking classes and kids camps.
- People of all ages attend events at Fort Worden: from the fifth and sixth graders who come each year for Water World at the Marine Science Center to fiddlers in their 80s and 90s who come for the multi-generational, world-renowned Fiddle Tunes festival.
- The Fort has two historic performance venues: the 1,200-seat McCurdy Pavilion and 275-seat Wheeler Theater.

### 2. FORT WORDEN OFFERS YEAR-ROUND ACCOMMODATIONS FOR CONFERENCE ATTENDEES AND LEISURE TRAVELERS

- Fort Worden is equipped with 456 bedrooms, ranging from former officer housing that comfortably sleeps up to 12, to dorm-style accommodations that can house a variety of groups from 10 to 500 people. For individual travelers, the Castle and Bliss House offer one-of-a-kind accommodations with tremendous, bluff-top views of the Cascades, Whidbey Island and Puget Sound
- Fort Worden is a perfect year-round destination for family reunions, vacation rentals and other group getaways. The 35 buildings with available housing range up to six bedrooms and each has a kitchen, dining room and living room.

### 3. FORT WORDEN IS A MAJOR NORTHWEST CONFERENCE CENTER

- Fort Worden offers a spectacular and historic setting featuring year-round full-service meeting and event facilities.
- Over 56,000 square-feet of meeting rooms can be tailored to accommodate any group.
- On-site local, organic and sustainable food service is offered by Bon Appétit Management Company.
- Fort Worden offers a multitude of outdoor spaces, breakout rooms and performance venues.

### 4. FORT WORDEN OFFERS VISITORS A CONFLUENCE OF HISTORY, NATURE AND IDEAS

- The site of Fort Worden has long been used as a gathering place—first among Native Americans, then by the U.S. Army and now by resident organizations and visitors.
- Today, leaders in the arts, music, literature, dance, woodworking and many other disciplines regularly come to Fort Worden.
- Fort Worden is home to four museums, including the Coast Artillery Museum, which was established to preserve and interpret coast artillery history with special emphasis on the harbor defenses of Puget Sound.
- The Port Townsend Marine Science Center has a natural history museum with a rare orca whale skeleton, exhibits, aquariums and touch tanks for all.

### 5. FORT WORDEN IS WITHIN THE CITY LIMITS OF PORT TOWNSEND, A POPULAR TOURIST DESTINATION FOR REGIONAL, NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL TRAVELERS

- Port Townsend hosts the world-renowned wooden boat festival, and the Northwest Maritime Center is a hub for maritime education, sailing, and small boat building and traditional maritime crafts. Port Townsend's historic Victorian downtown, uptown and Fort Worden are all listed as a U.S. National Landmark Historic District.
- Named one of the "Coolest Small Towns in America," Port Townsend hosts numerous annual, monthly and weekly events, including the Port Townsend Wooden Boat Festival, Jazz Port Townsend, the Port Townsend Acoustic Blues Festival, the Port Townsend Film Festival, Arts Walk and weekly boat races.

**6. FORT WORDEN IS A WASHINGTON STATE PARK AND SO MUCH MORE**

- Fort Worden is a 434-acre Washington state park with 12 miles of forested hiking trails (five miles are ADA compliant) and more than two miles of walkable beaches.
- The Fort provides many recreational facilities: tennis and volleyball courts, baseball and soccer fields, biking trails, horseshoes, croquet and much more.
- The Fort is a playground of hidden treasures for youth of all ages: exploring the historic batteries, monuments, and art installations is a favorite pastime.
- Fort Worden offers 80 full-service camp sites (water, electricity, restrooms and showers) that can be reserved up to one year in advance. Most of the 50 beach camp sites have magnificent views of the Cascades Mountain Range and Puget Sound.
- Fort Worden's 434 acres and adjoining waters are home to a broad variety of wildlife, from eagles and herons to deer and raccoons to passing orcas.
- Fort Worden offers a boat launch, dock space and moorage as well as kayak and rowboat rentals.
- Fort Worden offers an RV rally site for groups only. Qualifying groups must have a minimum of 10 to a maximum of 22 self-contained RVs.

## Goal and Objectives

### GOAL #1

Establish Fort Worden as Washington's lifelong learning center for arts, culture, education and history.

#### OBJECTIVES

- A. Build "Fort Worden, an historic gathering place" into a powerful brand that effectively communicates with target audiences.
- B. Increase participation in shoulder season events and programs.
- C. Secure additional partners that share the Fort's values and support its mission and vision.
- D. Experience website traffic of 1,000 hits per day by June 2015.
- E. Increase awareness of the Fort's unique arts, culture and education programming among local influencers.

### GOAL #2

Support and develop revenue-generating operations and programming that allow Fort Worden to be financially self-sustaining.

#### OBJECTIVES

- A. Secure new partners to bring additional programming (September through May) that requires overnight stays.
  - a) Identify target audience segments that will put "more heads in beds" based on the type and quality of accommodations.
- B. Increase 2014-2015 meeting/conference revenues from September through May by at least three percent.
  - a) Identify target audience segments that will put "more butts in seats" based on the type and quality of meeting rooms and conference facilities.
- C. Work with existing partners to add programming (September through May) that requires overnight stays.
- D. Plan and implement revenue-generating events that do not compete with existing partners programming.
- E. Achieve annual Discover Pass sales of at least \$250,000.

### GOAL #3

Strengthen the bond between Fort Worden, its resident partners, and Port Townsend community stakeholders.

#### OBJECTIVES

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- A. Conduct formal presentations of the Fort Worden brand and the strategic marketing plan to individual groups of partners and stakeholders in June 2014.
- B. Launch a proactive monthly system of communication with Fort Worden partners and key stakeholders (e.g., City of Port Townsend, Main Street, Chamber of Commerce, etc.) by July 2014.
- C. Engage partners and stakeholders in tailored cross promotions at least twice each year.
- D. Convene an annual meeting of partners and stakeholders each November to discuss issues and plans for the upcoming year.

## Strategies and Tactics

### Strategy 1: Brand Development

Develop an inspiring brand that embodies what Fort Worden is, does and stands for, and helps the Fort establish a lasting identity as a lifelong learning center for arts, culture and education.

#### Tactics

*(Note: Tactics 1 through 3 were completed simultaneously with development of this strategic marketing plan. Tactic 4 has not yet been implemented.)*

1. Create a name and tagline for Fort Worden.
2. Design a logo that visually reflects Fort Worden's desired identity. Build a color palette.
3. Prepare a brand standards guide with instructions for internal and external use of Fort Worden's brand (logo, fonts, colors, etc.).
4. Host a celebratory event to unveil Fort Worden's new brand. Hold the event at The Commons, and invite all partners, business and public agency stakeholders and community leaders. Offer light appetizers and beverages. Have FWPDA executive director and board president present the new brand and the rationale behind it, along with key messages. Emphasize the new brand's value in helping everyone speak in a unified voice about Fort Worden. Include handouts with messaging, unified voice and brand use guidelines.

## Strategy 2: Partner Development and Programs

Strengthen and expand Fort Worden’s arts, culture, education and heritage programming by proactively engaging with existing partner organizations and cultivating new partners.

### Tactics

1. Work with onsite partners to increase programming options supporting overnight stays. This might include offering a workshop or class that spans two days instead of just one, or several partners collaborating on consecutive programs. Host regular brainstorming sessions to generate discussion of new ideas and opportunities.
2. Develop an annual Fort Worden open house event, with each partner providing some way for visitors to engage with their services. For example, Corvidae Press might invite guests to participate in a simple printmaking process, Goddard College could offer student readings, and the Coast Artillery Museum might place archived photos or other interesting items on display exclusively during the open house event. Invite businesses from Port Townsend to set up stations offering food and beverages. Charge a reasonable flat fee for access to all open house events.
3. Support efforts to secure additional on-site partners by developing a list of organizations that provide programs or services in the arts, culture, education, heritage (and possibly science) fields. Begin by asking existing Fort Worden partners for their recommendations, then extend the ask to key leaders within the industry. Focus on organizations that do not duplicate the offerings of existing partners.
4. Prepare an introductory letter from the FWPDA executive director and create a FAQ sheet outlining the Fort Worden partner opportunity. Solicit applications for a limited number of new partner sites.

### Strategy 3: FWPDA Original Programming

Advance Fort Worden's identity as a lifelong learning center for arts, culture and education by implementing FWPDA-developed programming that does not compete with the offerings of partner organizations.

#### Tactics

Create an organic programming plan to ensure new events are effectively developed. The plan should (1) identify gaps in the types of events currently offered at Fort Worden, (2) consider potential conflicts with the City of Port Townsend, and (3) lay out strategies for program development. The FWPDA should consider acquiring an in-house event coordinator, and contracting with an event planning specialist to manage implementation.

Examples of events the FWPDA might produce are as follows.

- a. A two-day photography workshop led by renowned wildlife/nature photography Art Wolfe or photographers from National Geographic Traveler. Participation package options to include accommodations, meals and instruction. Participants will be able to select up to 20 of their own photos taken during the workshop for compilation in a personal Blurb book, mailed to each person several weeks after the event.
- b. A Tom Douglas culinary arts course where people learn cooking techniques and food preparation ideas directly from Tom (and perhaps another well-known guest chef or two). Scheduled over two days. Registration package options to include accommodations, meals and instruction.
- c. An ongoing overnight field trip program for children approved by school districts in western Washington. Learning opportunities might include hands-on arts activities through partner organizations, trips to the Marine Science Center, a walking history tour of the batteries and Coastal Artillery Museum, a park ranger-guided nature walk on the beach and trails. Registration package options to include accommodations in the dormitories and meals.

## Strategy 4: Broad Market Awareness/Earned Media

Use earned media tactics to build a strong identity for the Fort Worden brand while supporting direct revenue-generating efforts (i.e., lodging).

### Tactics

1. Conduct ongoing media relations to reach the (1) leisure traveler market and (2) meeting and conference planners.
  - a. Develop media lists for each market, encompassing both local/regional/statewide outlets serving the two audiences, and national outlets used by meeting planners.
  - b. Create a basic media kit, including backgrounder/history, fact sheets on all partners, FAQ, calendar of events, lodging overview, meetings/conferences fact sheet.
  - c. Build and maintain a photo library that includes shots of people participating in events as well as meeting facilities.
  - d. Prepare an editorial calendar based on seasonal events and schedules of key outlets.
    - Leisure traveler:
      - Seattle Magazine
      - Seattle Metropolitan
      - Sunset
      - Pacific Northwest
      - 425 Magazine
      - Washington Journey
      - North Sound Life
      - South Sound
      - Seattle Times
      - Seattle Weekly
      - The Stranger
      - City Arts
      - Tacoma News Tribune
    - Meeting planners:
      - The Olympian
      - The Herald
      - Conde Nast Traveler
      - National Geographic Traveler
    - Weddings:
      - Meetings & Conventions Magazine
      - BizBash
      - Special Events Magazine
      - Association Conventions & Facilities
      - Small Market Meetings
    - Weddings:
      - Seattle Bride
      - Seattle Met Bride and Groom



- e. Develop a list of story ideas, showcasing the Fort's assets (using the SWOT analysis as a starting point), likely to appeal to the media. Work these into the editorial calendar.
2. Develop a separate approach for bloggers, targeting those interested in travel, arts and culture, history and outdoor recreation. Explore ways to engage more personally with this audience, perhaps by sharing exclusive photos or anecdotes about happenings at the Fort.
3. Work with the City of Port Townsend to execute a fam trip. Focus on travel media in Washington, Oregon and British Columbia. Develop a two-day itinerary to ensure overnight stays at the Fort, and schedule the trip during a time when high-interest programming will occur. Cover the cost of accommodations, and at the end of the event, present each participant with a media kit that includes suggested story ideas about Fort Worden as a lifelong center for learning in arts, culture, education and history.
4. Set up one-on-one desk side briefings with media who did not participate in the fam trip. Create a "road show" presentation that showcases the Fort's unique assets, including plenty of visuals. Schedule the road show over a three- or four-day period as necessary to connect with all influential journalists.
5. Build a news section on the Fort Worden website to post news releases, photos, FAQ and other information pertinent to journalists.

## Strategy 5: Broad Market Awareness/Digital Media

Use owned and managed digital channels and platforms to extend the reach of Fort Worden's brand and direct revenue-generating efforts (i.e., lodging).

### Tactics

#### 1. WEBSITE (OWNED)

Prepare a launch plan for the new Fort Worden website.

- a. Send an email announcement about the site's launch, from the FWPDA executive director to all partners and stakeholders.
- b. Announce the new site through a news release to all local, regional, statewide and national media outlets.
- c. Prepare a hyperlinked button and secure placement on all partner and stakeholder websites (City of Port Townsend, Jefferson County, Washington State Parks, Port Townsend Main Street, PTGuide.com, others).

#### 2. BLOG (OWNED)

Develop a Fort Worden blog that stands alone but is linked to the Fort's website. Content will focus on all things happening at Fort Worden, with entries posted at least twice each week. Cultivate the participation of partner organizations as guest bloggers.

#### 3. SOCIAL MEDIA (MANAGED)

Build Fort Worden's social media presence to facilitate ongoing conversations about happenings at the Fort. Start by creating a social media plan that identifies the platforms most suited to Fort Worden's needs. Include a management matrix/editorial calendar with content ideas by platform and month. Develop a voice and style guide for use by those who post on any/every platform. Upon launch of each platform, notify past Fort Worden guests and visitors of the new site and invite their participation. Place platform icons on the Fort's website.

Preliminary ideas about Fort Worden's social media approach include the following:

- a. Consolidate the two existing Fort Worden Facebook pages, and revise to format as an organization, not an individual (currently set up as an individual). Employ design elements consistent with the Fort Worden brand. Access any existing database of visitors or guests to invite individuals to like the page; build this audience by placing the Facebook icon on the Fort Worden website and on all marketing tools and materials. Develop an editorial calendar for posts to maximize opportunities to engage fans with programming updates.
- b. Establish a Fort Worden Twitter account. Whenever events occur, send regular update tweets. Integrate key messages and demonstrate that something is always happening at the Fort to generate excitement and interest. Create and encourage people to use a Fort Worden hashtag (#fortworden) on Twitter.
- c. Establish an Instagram account for Fort Worden to take advantage of the unlimited photo opportunities during events and activities. Post photos to Instagram and other social media

platforms. Create and encourage people to use a Fort Worden hashtag (#fortworden) on Instagram.

- d. Set Fort Worden up on Pinterest as a resource for interesting trips and arts, culture, heritage and education learning opportunities. Build boards devoted to Fort Worden-centric disciplines such as historic buildings and sites, music, poetry and writing, maritime, woodworking, etc.

**4. VIDEOS (OWNED)**

Create a series of five short, compelling videos that present behind-the-scenes looks at the Fort's programming. For example, Diana Krall reading the thank-you letter she sent Centrum after her first appearance many years ago. Or several young children fascinated by an octopus or another mysterious sea creature at the Marine Science Center. Post the videos to YouTube at pre-planned weekly intervals, and integrate them available into the Fort's website.

## Strategy 6: Broad Market Awareness/Paid Media

Develop and implement a paid media campaign that (a) builds awareness of Fort Worden as a center of lifelong learning for arts, culture and education and (b) supports revenue-generating efforts (i.e., lodging).

### Tactics

#### 1. CREATIVE APPROACH/MEDIA PLAN

Develop the overarching creative approach that will guide formation of all campaign materials/tools. Prepare a preliminary media plan to identify the most effective vehicles and outlets.

#### 2. TELEVISION

Produce a :30 spot that relies on the wealth of compelling imagery found at Fort Worden – historic buildings, scenic grounds, events, programs, etc. – to capture viewer attention and interest. Use the ad as one element of the campaign, with a media buy targeting western Washington audiences interested in arts, culture, education, history and the outdoors.

#### 3. RADIO

Produce a series of :30 radio ads (three to five), each focused on a specific reason to plan a trip to the Fort: take a wood working class, visit unique museums, enjoy bird-watching and orca sightings, etc. Place the ads on radio stations with relevant audiences.

#### 4. ONLINE ADVERTISING/MARKETING

- a. Use Google AdWords (a search engine marketing – SEM – tactic) and Facebook advertising to reach people looking for things to do and places to visit in the Puget Sound region. Identify key words (possibilities include arts and culture events, music festivals, weekend events, art workshops, etc.). Click-throughs will take visitors to the Fort Worden website, perhaps to campaign-specific pages.
- b. Schedule display advertising on sites with popular events/entertainment pages, such as the Seattle Times, The Stranger, Seattle Weekly, Tacoma News Tribune, The Herald, etc. Create ad copy that reinforces key messaging related to Fort Worden as a hub for arts, culture and education by featuring partner programming such as workshops, events, etc.

#### 5. PRINT ADVERTISING

Design print ads for placement in publications that reach specific target audiences: meeting planners (Meetings & Conventions Magazine, BizBash, Special Events Magazine), brides and wedding planners (Seattle Bride), SMERFE groups (Association Conventions & Facilities, Small Market Meetings). Schedule media buys based on seasonality and Fort Worden's need for revenue during shoulder seasons.

#### 6. BROCHURE

Design and produce a brochure communicating Fort Worden's key messages and describing the Fort's unique attributes: arts, culture and education offerings from partner organizations; historic buildings; hiking trails, beaches and campgrounds; overnight accommodations; meeting and

conference facilities. Distribute brochures to convention and visitors bureaus throughout western Washington and to Port Townsend stakeholders. Establish a system of checking in with various distribution centers to replenish brochure supplies as needed.

## Strategy 7: Group Facilities Marketing

Develop and implement a group facilities marketing program to establish Fort Worden as a major player in the groups/meetings/conferences sector.

### Tactics

#### SMERFE GROUPS (ASSOCIATIONS)

1. Pull records of groups that have held meetings or conferences at Fort Worden since 2009. Prepare personalized emails announcing the Fort's new management, improvements already in place and those to come, and other exciting news. If the organization has not held a meeting at the Fort recently (within the past two years), consider offering an incentive to re-book. Invite recipients to visit the new website.
2. Design and produce a direct mail piece specifically for SMERFE audiences, focused on affordability, access by car (important to groups in Washington, Oregon, British Columbia), and flexible lodging options. Include a call to action, such as a discount applied to bookings made by a certain date.
3. To tap the reunions market, send the direct mail piece to college/university alumni associations, and consider online advertising with Facebook, Classmates.com, Reunions.com, Reunionsmag.com and others.
4. Host a fam trip for meeting planners, inviting professionals from Washington, Oregon and British Columbia. Develop a two-day itinerary to ensure overnight stays at the Fort, and schedule the event during a shoulder season but when there are activities taking place at both Fort Worden and in Port Townsend. Cover the cost of accommodations, and at the end of the trip, send each participant away with an information kit that includes the Top Ten Reasons to Book Your Meeting at Fort Worden.

#### WEDDINGS

1. Exhibit at wedding and bridal shows held in the Puget Sound region with a Fort Worden table/booth offering information about weddings at the Fort. A sampling of shows held each year includes:
  - Everett Bridal Expo
  - Everett-Lynnwood Fall Wedding Expo
  - Northwest Bridal Showcase
  - Seattle Fall Wedding Expo
  - Seattle Wedding Show
  - Skagit Wedding Show
  - South Sound Wedding Show
  - Tacoma Fall Wedding Expo
  - Tacoma Spring Wedding Expo
  - West Sound Wedding Show

Consider including a promotional offer (discounted facility rental fees, special lodging packages) for weddings booked by a specific date.

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2. Pitch Seattle Bride and Seattle Met Bride and Groom magazines on a story about Fort Worden as a destination wedding venue. Emphasize the unique aspects of having a wedding at such a richly historic site (a National Historic Landmark), use the story of Alexander's Castle to capture interest, offer anecdotes about past weddings that may intrigue, etc. Invite the magazine's reporter/editor to the Fort for a personal tour.
3. Host a lunch for western Washington wedding planners, photographers, caterers and others involved in the wedding industry. Tour attendees through the chapel, The Commons and other appropriate spaces, as well as to unique photo shoot locations on the grounds. Provide each participant with a wedding packet that includes specifications and wedding FAQs.
4. Explore opportunities to add Fort Worden to lists of destination wedding venues on sites such as theknot.com, weddingwire.com, mywedding.com and others.

## Strategy 8: Community Stakeholder Development

Establish a proactive relationship development effort between Fort Worden staff and community stakeholders (Port Townsend residents and businesses, public agencies and partner organizations) to ensure consistent communication and foster *esprit de corps*.

### Tactics

1. Implement a Monday morning eblast from the FWPDA executive director to all partners and stakeholders. Using the Fort's new branding, design an email template that presents information in a visually appealing manner. Keep content short, using bulleted text to list all the events and happenings at the Fort for the coming week. Tone should be friendly, upbeat and collaborative. Each update will encourage recipients to provide feedback and/or suggestions, and will include concise messages about the proper use of Fort Worden branding.
2. Bring together partners and stakeholders for a marketing charrette each fall to update marketing and communications strategies and tactics for the following year. Encourage both groups to share plans specific to their organizations or agencies, and identify opportunities for collaboration and joint promotion.
3. Prepare a quarterly report summarizing the status of marketing and communications initiatives. Include quantifiable metrics whenever possible: the number of programs/events that took place, attendance at events, paid media that was placed, editorial coverage resulting from media outreach, social media engagement, etc. Design a user-friendly, brand-consistent presentation format and distribute via email.
4. Prepare an annual report following the same guidelines presented in the preceding tactic.
5. When appropriate, support the Port Townsend community by including media buys in the Port Townsend Leader.
6. Maintain high visibility for Fort Worden through the FWPDA executive director's participation in public meetings, committees (LTAC and others), meetings with local elected officials, and regular contact with stakeholders at the City of Port Townsend, Port of Port Townsend, Jefferson County, Washington State Parks, and others.



## Strategy 9: Add-On Revenue Generation

Support sales of the Discover Pass and use of Fort Worden's campgrounds by including both in appropriate, targeted marketing initiatives.

### Tactics

#### **DISCOVER PASS**

1. Include Discover Pass branding on all marketing collateral developed for Fort Worden, including the Fort's website. (If possible, the Discover Pass will also be available for purchase on the website.)
2. Inventory all points-of-sale at Fort Worden and ensure the Discover Pass is being made available at each one. Prepare a talking points/FAQ sheet for all personnel who interact with the Fort's visitors and guests.
3. In June and July, when festival and event traffic at Fort Worden is very high, set up Discover Pass express stations throughout the grounds. The stations will sell only the Discover Pass, and will be identified with easy-to-spot signage.

#### **CAMPGROUNDS**

1. Ensure Fort Worden's campgrounds are listed on all Washington state park websites; update or add correct information as necessary.
2. Describe camping options in the brochure produced to help market Fort Worden. Provide contact information for making reservations.
3. Include campground information in eblasts sent to Fort Worden stakeholders in Port Townsend, especially during prime camping months.

#### **PROMOTIONAL ITEMS**

1. Offer Fort Worden-branded merchandise – hats, t-shirts, bags, etc. – for sale only at on-site locations.

## Timeline

This section is still in development; final plan will be completed by May 1, 2014.

## Budget

This section is still in development; final plan will be completed by May 1, 2014.

## Evaluation

This section is still in development; final plan will be completed by May 1, 2014.