

Fort Worden Task Force Evaluation of Governance Alternatives

The State Parks and Recreation Commission (Commission) has adopted a vision for Fort Worden as a center for life long learning. As a first step towards this vision, the Commission has chartered a task force to evaluate existing and alternative governance structures for management of the Fort. Through this process, the Fort Worden Task Force has developed a working recommendation that a non-profit corporation is the best suited manager. This structure combines the fund raising capability and management flexibility of non-profits with investment from private business, and the financial capacity, stability and public accountability of state government.

A non-profit appears to provide funding opportunities and flexibility necessary to achieve the Commission's vision for the park. It is important that the Commission assure the public that Fort Worden will always remain a state park and be managed according to the vision, mission, values, and principles the Commission has adopted for the Fort. It is also important to assure that agency employees will be held harmless should a transition be pursued.

Should the Commission ultimately decide that a non-profit corporation is best-suited manager of Fort Worden, management responsibility should be transitioned over a period of time, as the new manager builds experience, capacity, and capability. A formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Commission and a prospective non-profit should guide this transition, which may take several years to accomplish.

During the transition, the Commission will ask the non-profit to demonstrate that it is capable of assuming management responsibility. Likewise, the Commission will need to demonstrate to the new management entity that it is willing to transition management authority and has put in place policies and provisions to that end.

The matrix below outlines a series of management capabilities and characteristics that the Fort Worden Task Force identified as necessary to establish Fort Worden as center for life long learning and achieve the Commission's vision. The Task Force then evaluated applicable governance structures with respect to the identified capabilities and characteristics. Shaded areas represent the structure Task Force members found most responsive to each of the capabilities and characteristics.

Table 1: Fort Worden Task Force Governance Evaluation

ISSUES/ATTRIBUTES	General Purpose Government		Special Purpose Government		Not-For-Profit Corporation
	State	Local	State Chartered	Locally Chartered	
	(Status Quo)	(City or County)	(WSCTC; Safeco PFD; Owest PSA)	(PDA; PFD)	Education Inst; Charity; Church
STRUCTURAL:					
How Established/Relative Ease	X				X
Ability to Prioritize/Focus on Fort Worden					X
Flexibility/Agility in Responding to New Opportunities or Changed Circumstances					X
Ability/Incentive to Operate Transparently and Accountably	X		X		X
MISSION:					
Ability/Incentive to Address State Priorities in Government (POG)	X				
Ability to Develop and Implement 3LC Vision/Mission/Business Plan					X
Ability to Nurture/Sustain Programming					X
RESOURCES/OPERATIONS:					
Ability to Effectively Partner with State					X
Ability to Achieve Predictability in State Resources			X		
Capital	X		X		
Operating			X		
Ability/Incentive to Behave Entrepreneurially					X
Ability to Generate Resources					X
Private					X
Enterprise			X		X
Capital			X		X
Operating					X
Philanthropic					X
Capital					X
Operating					X
Other Public			X		X
Capital			X		
Operating					X
Ability/Incentive to Embrace Socially Responsible Business Practices, Including Employee Issues					X
EXTERNAL RELATIONS:					
Ability to Attract and Integrate Partner Stakeholders					X
Ability/Incentive to Address Desires of Statewide Constituency	X				X
Ability to Collaborate with Local Community					X
Public Users					X
Volunteers					X
Local Governments					X
Local Businesses					X