

Sound View Camp and Retreat Center



Business Plan

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Executive Summary

Sound View Camp has been revitalized to face new opportunities in the 2020s. From 2016 to 2020, a dedicated staff and board worked tirelessly to clean up the facility, repurpose spaces, and develop programs to best utilize this remarkable outdoor ministry site.

There are definite challenges to operating a “denominational church camp” as defined by David Lee, author of the Sound View master site plan. In the initial talks as staff, board, alumni, and church leaders discussed the future of Sound View he iterated that “if the camp expects to fill all the beds with Presbyterian kids, it might as well close its doors right now”. With these words in mind, the camp leadership has worked to move outside of the box and into new territory. Since adopting this new idea, Sound View has thrived by recruiting children, schools and family users from outside our denomination thus expanding the reach of the Olympia Presbytery ministry in a way that only camps can.

An award of a “revitalization” grant from the Presbytery of Olympia set in motion much of what Sound View expects to do in the future. Re-tooling the program focus to include Earth Care, and the realization that the Sound View Site is ideal for resident outdoor environmental education (OEE) inspired the staff and board to move ahead to offer a weekday OEE program to western Washington schools. Doing so, with an updated website, caught the attention of the Nisqually Land Trust which hopes to protect Sound View’s unique property from commercial development.

Sound View still faces challenges that we are working towards fixing. The Presbytery’s bold financial investment in supporting the creation of the master plan has allowed us to look towards a clear future. Incredible progress has been made in the past four years, even while working creatively with a tight budget. The NLT grant of \$1.6 million will allow us more resources to further address challenges which currently limit financial growth. These challenges include the bed capacity, the configuration of lodging, and needs for updated infrastructure and fire safety upgrades. Addressing these challenges will open up a host of new ministry possibilities and sources of revenue that will allow the camp to remain sustainable while maintaining a generous endowment.

Another positive is Sound View’s improving reputation and growing recognition in the western Washington camping world. Campers leave happy, groups are pleased with the customer service and activities, improvements are noticed, families recommend the camp to other families, and the food is exceptional. In the decade ahead, a growing reputation will feed new and established programs.

Until summer camps (the most profitable endeavor) are full, there will be a budget shortfall. NLT funds, in an endowment, will cover any shortfall and provide a significant surplus for upgrades

as well as for a maintenance reserve. The aging infrastructure of Sound View will always present surprises but will not break the bank due to the NLT endowment.

This plan looks at what works and the staff's commitment to make it work better. The time for experimentation is over. The staff/board understand how Sound View can best operate in the 2020s with full summer camps, OEE groups and rental groups. The NLT grant will provide the resources we need to move into a sustainable future for Sound View.

Description

Sound View Camp is the Presbyterian (USA) outdoor ministry of the Olympia Presbytery. Crucial to outdoor ministry is the site itself, as the experience of being at Sound View drives the program. From 2016 to 2020, Sound View Camp has undergone a “reboot” of sorts to stabilize the nearly 100 acres of woodland, fields, and waterfront and the buildings and program areas contained within its bounds. The “reboot” also included efforts to reestablish a good reputation for the programs offered, the accommodations provided, the food served, missional focus, and the commitment to Earth care.

Achievements

- The site has been cleaned up throughout
- **Accommodations** have been updated and purposed for specific reasons
 - The **tent cabin area** has seen the conversion of four units into more spacious dwellings. The four remaining units have reconfigured bunks to meet ACA standards. The central lodge was repurposed (painted, re-furnished) into a meeting area and library. The capacity for this village has increased from 80 to 88. The tent cabin area has been designated as primarily serving summer camp youth and outdoor education groups.
 - **The Shire** has been repurposed to serve adults and families. The chalets have been insulated/heated and new windows have been installed. The Agape cabins have new bunks and fireplace heaters. A small lodge has been created from the previous platform tent structure. The Shire sleeps 32.
 - **Calvinwood Lodge** remains the preferred adult lodge due to its room configuration, kitchen, and meeting area. Trundle beds were added into each room to increase the capacity of the building when school groups are present.
 - The **Longhouse** is attractive to youth groups. It sleeps 36. Aside from replacing furniture, no upgrades have been done.
 - **Rainier View Cabin** has been re-opened and set as cooks’ lodging as well as classroom / arts and crafts space.
 - **The A-Frame** upper level has been isolated with a separate entrance as summer staff housing. The lower level has been repurposed as a **chapel / music center**.
 - The **House at the Entry** has been repurposed to serve as a hub for spring and fall staff as well as a summer residence for the camp director.
- The **dining hall** has been upgraded significantly to better serve groups.
 - The eating area has been carpeted with carpet tiles which has reduced the noise level.
 - All tables and chairs have been replaced. Rectangular, five-foot round, and six-foot round tables have allowed more flexibility in eating configurations.
 - Archival items are displayed to create a sense of history.
 - A large “giving tree” mural graces one end of the eating area.

- The **kitchen** has seen improvements to best use a limited cooking area as well as get it in compliance with health standards.
 - Warming units have been added for food storage and buffet lines
 - Refrigerator added to dining hall to ensure cold drinks
 - Insulated salad / breakfast bar can be iced
 - Meat slicer added to cut down cost of cold cuts and cheese
 - A commercial mixer was donated to allow the making of bread and pizza dough
 - The bathroom was removed and replaced with a vegetable prep area
 - Plate caddies were donated and cutlery racks were purchased to ensure sanitary storage
 - Numerous little fixes have occurred to ensure safe handling of food and a better menu.
- The **Well-House Building** has been renovated to also serve as an office / welcome center.
- **Infrastructure** concerning Sound View Camp has been identified and repaired as necessary. This includes drinking water and septic systems.
- **Program offerings and spaces** have been created or enhanced.
 - The waterfront has new boats (corcls) appropriate for younger campers.
 - Intertidal zone curriculum has been incorporated in summer, family camp, and OEE programs.
 - The waterfront campfire area was moved slightly up the hill to expand the waterfront field and to make it more accessible on wet days.
 - A music program has been created in the A-Frame with ukuleles and handbells.
 - A stage/campfire area was built with volunteer labor near the dining hall for summer skit night as well as campfires for spring/fall groups.
 - A mini farm was developed from the old horse corrals. Presently summer campers and OEE groups can learn about sustainable living, responsibility and empathy from spending time with our goats, sheep, chickens, turkeys and a llama.
 - Hiking trails have been reclaimed and expanded thanks to a partnership with AmeriCorps NCCC.
 - A large, fenced vegetable garden was established with the help of AmeriCorps NCCC and other volunteers. This led to a partnership with the Key Peninsula Farm Tour and a year long VISTA volunteer arriving in August 2020 who will develop a sustainable living curriculum.
 - The Internet is available in more areas of camp.

Product, Service, and Program Details

The mission of Sound View Camp, adopted in 2018, reads

Our mission is to offer a sacred place for all to experience God's love, enjoy God's creation, and explore God's unique plan for our lives.

A camp primarily is a PLACE. A lot of effort must go into making that place attractive, welcoming, and appropriate for the people who visit. Sound View Camp's "product" tends to fit into four categories with each having a missional statement.

In our **summer camp programs**, we will...

- Strive to build a Christ-centered community for campers and staff where all feel welcome.
- Openly speak of Jesus' love for all of us and His plan for each of us.
- Look for teachable moments in camp activities and gatherings backed up by Biblical truth.
- Pass on ways to honor God by taking good care of His creation.

With our **family events**, we will...

- Offer a Christ-centered community for guests and staff where all feel welcome.
- Openly speak of Jesus' love for all of us and His plan for each of us.
- Provide activities that encourage families to play and worship together in the out-of-doors.
- Pass on ways to honor God by taking good care of His creation.

When serving **retreat groups** we will

- Offer a Christ-centered community where all feel welcome.
- Be role models of inclusive, Christian behavior.
- Provide areas of camp, both wild and well-kept, for quiet reflection.
- Share our plan and practices for taking good care of His creation.

Students and teachers visiting for **outdoor environmental education** will experience...

- Talented staff with an attitude of joy for being caretakers of such a wonderful space.
- Learning new skills for "Earth Care" which can be implemented in their own communities.
- Activities which encourage playing together in the out-of-doors.
- Areas of camp, both wild and well-kept, for quiet reflection.

During this time of “re-boot”, Sound View has discovered the direction that will drive its program into the 2020s. As it has fixed up the facilities, Sound View has also tried new things on an established as well as a gradually growing base. Some programs have worked while others have not.

The site currently has challenges which will be addressed as the master plan is implemented. These include:

- Limited adult-friendly lodging
- Limited capacity
- Inability to serve a group if the power fails (limiting winter use)
- Limited large group meeting areas.

The services we will focus on in the 2020s, based on historic success during the reboot, will include:

1. Summer Youth Camp

- a. Easily, three sessions a summer can be filled. We’re working towards filling four sessions.
- b. Each session will be multi-aged (as opposed to elementary camp, jr high camp, etc)
 - i. Youth Camp for ages 8 to 14
 - ii. Expedition for ages 12-15
 - iii. Mini Camp for ages 6-9
 - iv. Day Camp for local children, ages 6 to 12.
- c. Sound View will work on securing at least two vans to provide transportation for day camp as well as those who cannot get their children to resident camp.
- d. Sound View will continue to use supervised teen leaders to augment the summer staff.

2. Outdoor Environmental Education

- a. Sound View is the new player on the scene and has other competitors on the Key Peninsula. However, not being too “set in its ways”, Sound View delivers a unique experience based on the wishes of the school and serves smaller schools that are unable to book with a larger, more established program.
- b. The spring season can be expanded into April either with individual school groups or Sound View-run OEE spring break camps.
 - i. June is filled with large, long-term schools that have found a home with Sound View.
 - ii. Sound View can accommodate more schools in April and May.
- c. The fall season also has a few schools who want to make their trip an annual event. Three new schools from fall 2019 have already reserved their dates for fall 2020.
 - i. The fall season often focuses on teambuilding.

- ii. We anticipate that very few schools would opt for November-December dates.

3. Family Programs

- a. Sound View will continue to offer family camps for...
 - i. Mother's Day Weekend (Mom and Me)
 - ii. Memorial Day Weekend (Entire Family)
 - iii. Father's Day Weekend (Dad and Me)
 - iv. Labor Day Weekend (Entire Family)
- b. Family programs are kept affordable for children, especially since they are designed to be a "feeder" for summer youth programs.
- c. It is the goal by 2025 to have grown these programs enough that they have exclusive use of the site. Until then, additional groups compatible with these programs can rent the Longhouse and supplement the weekend income.
- d. It is desirable for PC(USA) churches to "adopt" any of these weekends as an activity for their own members. Wedgwood Presbyterian has done this with the Labor Day Weekend camp since 2018.
- e. The family camp model is often applied to family church retreats.

4. Rental Group Retreats

- a. Sound View has a healthy three-season rental group retreat calendar.
- b. As part of the "reboot", it was determined that food service and programs would be freely offered so as to ensure that guests have the best experience possible.
- c. Groups presently using Sound View are diverse.
 - i. Youth groups - including several from the Olympia and Seattle Presbyteries
 - ii. Adult groups such as women's retreats, Sunday school teachers, men's groups
 - iii. LARP groups have been whittled down to one (Shadow Accord) which uses camp five or six weekends a year - mostly in the non-prime months.
 - iv. Youth camps (not Sound View led)
 - v. Weeklong family performing arts camp. (CAZ)
 - vi. Recovery groups
 - vii. Veteran's groups
 - viii. Church family camps
 - ix. AmeriCorps training groups
 - x. Team Rubicon
 - xi. American Indian Youth Council (national Presbyterian native youth council coming in 2020)
 - xii. Camp Hope (coming in 2021)
- d. Sound View will continue to recruit groups appropriate for the site and the season and look for long-term relationships.

Management Team

Managing the 100 acres of Sound View Camp calls for a talented team willing to take on multiple roles. It also requires an engaged Board of Directors to help with policy, fundraising, and management.

1. Year-Round Staff
 - a. Camp Director (full-time)
 - i. Primary contact for weekend groups and summer camp
 - ii. Runs programs and hosts groups
 - iii. Liaison between Presbytery churches and Sound View
 - b. Outdoor Environmental Education Director (full-time)
 - i. Primary contact for OEE groups and family camp
 - ii. Runs programs and hosts groups
 - iii. Assists with marketing
 - c. Food Service Manager (full-time in summer, part-time in off season)
 - d. Maintenance/Hospitality (part-time/hourly, specialists are called in when needed)
 - e. Finance Manager (full-time)
 - i. Pays bills, prepares taxes - tracks budget
 - ii. Liaison between Leadership Council and Sound View
 - iii. Purchasing expert
2. Seasonal Staff
 - a. Spring
 - i. Sound View hires up to four staff members
 1. Work with schools
 2. Run programs on weekends
 3. Assist in kitchen
 4. Perform spring maintenance
 - b. Summer
 - i. Sound View hires a team of paid staff, International volunteers, and teen volunteers
 1. Staffing for summer camps
 2. Staffing for summer groups
 3. Staffing for kitchen and maintenance
 4. Staffing for specialized programs (ropes course, farm)
 - c. Fall
 - i. Sound View hires up to four staff members
 1. Work with schools
 2. Run programs on weekends

3. Assist in kitchen

4. Perform fall maintenance / camp winterization

- d. Winter

- i. Weekend staff is recruited for occasional groups which the year-round team cannot handle alone.

Marketing Strategy

It was determined through the strategic master planning sessions that it is crucial to reach out to as broad of a base as possible, since marketing a denominational church camp for a denomination with diminishing youth numbers is a challenge.

- Sound View Camp will use social media effectively which may include employing social media consultants when necessary.
- Sound View Camp will maintain an attractive, up-to-date website that lists upcoming events and news of interest to visitors.
- Sound View Camp will continue to build its database (Ultracamp) of families, individuals, donors, schools, clubs, churches, etc. to take advantage of no-cost email marketing campaigns.
- Sound View Camp will produce an annual brochure that lists yearly programs and opportunities for retreats and outdoor education.
- Starting in December 2020, Sound View Camp will produce an attractive annual report to thank groups, donors, and report on the health of the ministry.
- Sound View Camp will continue to build relationships with individual churches in the Olympia and Seattle Presbyteries, knowing that effective marketing happens in each congregation.
- Sound View Camp will continue to participate in camp fairs and local events such as the Key Peninsula Farm Tour to promote programs.

Capitalization and Finances

The reboot of Sound View Camp (2016-2019) produced budgets that will not need to be repeated in the 2020s. Unbudgeted improvements were made as well as crucial repairs to infrastructure. Program areas were developed to provide meaningful activities for guests.

The 2020s will yield less volatile budget years.

A conservative budget would show Sound View with \$450,000 of income and \$485,000 of expenses - a \$35,000 shortfall. This shortfall would be erased with a full summer resident camp season, which is the goal.

A proposed relationship with the Nisqually Land Trust would put \$1,600,000 into an endowment fund in return for a desirable environmental easement on the site. This endowment would yield at least \$50,000 annually for the camp. This endowment fund could also grow with other significant contributions and planned giving strategies.

The income from the endowment will cover foreseeable budget shortfalls as well as be a source of funding for planned and emergency improvements.

Appendix

OEE Program

- Schools continue to return for our OEE program, attracted by the flexibility of our programming, excellent class offerings, our beautiful setting, and the affordable prices.
- We just signed a contract with Tacoma Public Schools. We have one low-income (Title 1) school coming in spring 2020, with a principal who plans to recommend us to other TPS schools who have not previously attended OEE camps.
- Teachers, principals, and students love our programs. Here are a few of the many comments from OEE camp participants:

Camp was a "10" this year. We want two camps! - **Parent from PEARL homeschool program, Quilcene School District**

We had such a lovely time at Soundview. Thank you again for all your hard work. You've got a great program going!! The momentum is strong. Hope you have a wonderful and busy summer!! - **Teacher from West Seattle Montessori**

I just wanted to write to say thank you for the wonderful field trip! We had a great time and the students really enjoyed it. We are looking forward to our second day in June. - **Teacher from East Port Orchard Elementary**

It is so wonderful to work with Sound View Camp. I am so glad we found it. Thanks for everything and I'm glad next year is reserved. I have only heard positives all around! - **Principal of Manchester Elementary**

Thanks again for such a wonderful experience! Everyone agreed it was a total blast and extremely successful! My principal wants me to go ahead and book next year already! She was really happy with my report. Are you able to get us set up with a date already? I want to do it the first Wednesday - Friday in October again. That was PERFECT? - **Teacher from Manchester Elementary, sent hours after they went home from camp**

The students all had a fabulous time and I hope we will be able to visit your facility again. I highly recommend the camp for school groups. The lodging was excellent and works for those who do not like tent camping. The staff is helpful, kind, and very knowledgeable. We'll see you next year!!!!!! - **Teacher from Capital Montessori**

What would you tell a friend at home about Sound View Camp? (**answers from Capital Montessori 5th-7th graders**)

- That it's fun and they should try all the activities.
- There are so many fun activities, and you get a great workout as well as a beautiful landscape.
- You got to hike in the woods in the dark.
- It was awesome.
- That it was really fun and they should go.
- It is a really fun camp. They have archery, paintball, soccer nets. The cooks make really good food. You get dessert at every meal! They have the tidal zone and it is really cool.

Garden Program

- In fall 2018, we hosted a Farm to Table Dinner along with a local chef, raising \$1000 to build a 40x40 foot garden with raised beds. In spring and summer 2019, this garden was bursting with vegetables and we were able to start cooking classes during summer camp.
- We were approved to host an Americorps volunteer from August 2020-2021, with the high likelihood of being approved for two more years. This person will essentially be a full-time staff member with a commitment from Sound View of only \$7500 per year. Their job will be to expand our garden and farm sustainable living program, enhancing the curriculum and helping us do more community outreach.
- We received a \$350 grant from the Tacoma Garden Club to install an irrigation system in the camp garden, which will allow campers to focus less on watering and more on learning and other garden tasks.

Summer and Family Programs

- Our new Mom and Me and Dad and Me camps have brought 47 families to Sound View in 2018 and 2019. Most of these have been new families with no previous affiliation to Sound View or the Presbyterian church. Nineteen families are already signed up for our 2020 camps, months in advance of the May and June dates. Many families who have attended have subsequently sent their kids to summer camp, participated in volunteer days, and returned to other family camps.
- We have strengthened our partnership with the North Coast Presbytery in Colombia, bringing 2-3 college-age Presbyterian Colombians to serve as counselors each summer. One of last year's star counselors will be returning this

summer as a counselor and an experienced guide for our international volunteers.

Social Media/Marketing

- We started an Instagram account and increased it to 200+ followers within a year. This is the way to market to young people and potential staff these days.
- Our Facebook followers increased from 450 to 1457, thanks to frequent posting from Sound View staff. Facebook has also been used effectively as a marketing tool for events.

Community Involvement

- We got the camp involved in the Key Peninsula Farm Tour, an excellent opportunity to interact with community members. This has brought 250+ people to camp each October. We've recruited volunteers, summer campers, and family campers from their attendance at the Farm Tour. We also had a booth at the Farm Tour's Apple Squeeze in 2019, an event which 950 people attended.
- We offered free outdoor education classes to the local Evergreen Elementary School, familiarizing more local kids and their chaperoning parents with Sound View's facilities and programs.