

Building a Better Website

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Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy

March 6, 2017

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Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy

- Founded 1964
- 362 sq. miles, 4 counties (Montgomery, Bucks, Berks, Lehigh)
- Mission: Environmental Education, Conservation, Outreach



Session Goals

- Website and Web Design Basics
- User-Centric Concepts
- Case Study

General Approach

**Building a website is not a “project”
or “once and done”**

It's an ongoing commitment.

Why Have A Website?

- ▶ Extends organization reach
 - ▶ Site is available 24/7; self-service
- ▶ Reduces administrative burden
 - ▶ Fewer phone calls and paper forms, less staff time
- ▶ Part of your overall communication strategy
 - ▶ Consistent with email, social media, direct mail, etc.
- ▶ Your public face
 - ▶ Reflects your professionalism to the outside world

Definition

- A website is a **window** into an organization. The designer has control over:
 - Frame size
 - Broad or deep view
 - Display
 - What is presented
 - Artistic elements



“Web design” = site structure, navigation, and functionality

Viewer Perspective



People see things differently.

Taking someone else's viewpoint is a real challenge!
But it should be done.

User-Centric Design (UCD)

- vs. Organization-Centric
- 3 simple steps:
 1. **Define most likely visitors**
 2. **Identify their reasons to use your site**
 3. **Primarily build around visitor needs**
- Balance with organization's goals

Why is UCD Important?

- ▶ Satisfied visitors
 - ▶ Donors, members, sponsors, participants, volunteers
- ▶ Dissatisfied visitors
 - ▶ Lost opportunities



User Preferences

Users WANT to:

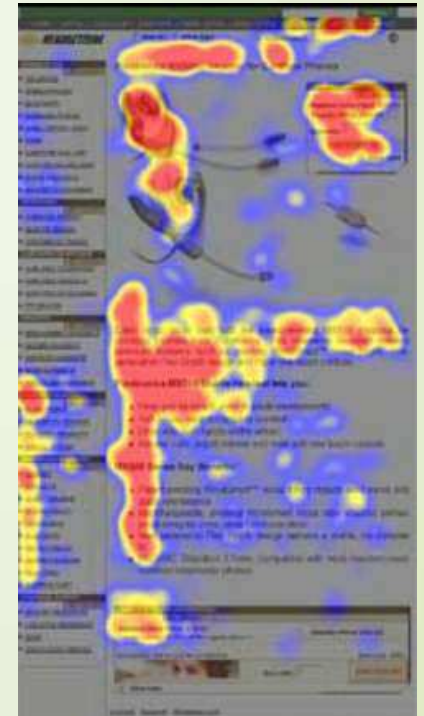
- ▶ Accomplish their goals
- ▶ Do it themselves
- ▶ Use their mobile device
- ▶ See images and links
- ▶ Trust your site

Users DON'T WANT to:

- ▶ Read text
- ▶ Guess what you mean
- ▶ Scroll (much)
- ▶ Hunt for information
- ▶ Be overwhelmed

A Few Design Best Practices

- Above The Fold
 - What's beyond the visible field? (Not going to find out.)
- Sweet Spot
 - Eye-tracking studies show areas most viewed
 - Differs for mobile users
- Logical Navigation
 - Descriptive menu labels
- Search
 - Where's that search box?!



Case Study

- www.perkiomenwatershed.org
- November 2012 - January 2014

“Before”

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The screenshot shows the homepage of the Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy website. At the top is a navigation menu with links: About Us, Education, Conservation, Stormwater, Calendar, Events, and Partners & Resources. Below the menu is a header area with the organization's logo on the left, contact information (1 Skippack Pike, Schwenksville, PA 19473, 610-287-9383, pwc@perkiomenwatershed.org) in the middle, and a 'Join Our List' form on the right. A curved banner below the header contains links for 'Become a Member', 'Make a Donation', and 'Sponsorship Opportunities'. The main content area features a welcome message and a 'Volunteer for a Planting' section with dates (August 24-26 and August 31-September 1) and location (Vineyards Community in Pennsburg, 10:00am-4:00pm). A photograph of a wetland area is shown below the volunteer information. To the right, there are sections for 'What's New' (Halloween Night Hike Sponsors) and 'In The News' (The H&K Group's Charity Golf Open to Benefit the Conservancy!). At the bottom right, there is an 'Events and Classes' section listing a meeting on 8/20/2012. A 'Click to SIGN UP' button is located below the photograph.

About Us **Education** **Conservation** **Stormwater** **Calendar** **Events** **Partners & Resources**

Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy

Home
Contact Us
Volunteer Opportunities
FAQs
Search

Join Our List:
Email Address
Privacy by SafeSubscribeSM

1 Skippack Pike
Schwenksville, PA 19473
610-287-9383
pwc@perkiomenwatershed.org


[Become a Member](#) [Make a Donation](#) [Sponsorship Opportunities](#)

Welcome to the Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy.

Volunteer for a Planting

August 24, 25 and 26
August 31 and September 1

Vineyards Community in Pennsburg
10:00am-4:00pm



[Click to SIGN UP](#)

Upcoming Out and About Explorations

What's New

Halloween Night Hike Sponsors
Interested in sponsoring the 2012 Halloween Night Hike at the Conservancy? Please contact Linda Oltman at 610.287.9383 or lotman@perkiomenwatershed.o... Show All

[View All](#)

In The News

- The H&K Group's Charity Golf Open to Benefit the Conservancy!
The H&K Group has selected the Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy as beneficiary of its 2012 Employee C...
- Recent Conservancy News
For the most recent Conservancy newsletter, follow this link. We invite you to sign up at the top o...

[View All](#)

Events and Classes

8/20/2012
6:30 PM - Special Events
Committee Meeting

Initial website:
2003

2012 view

Platform, Tools

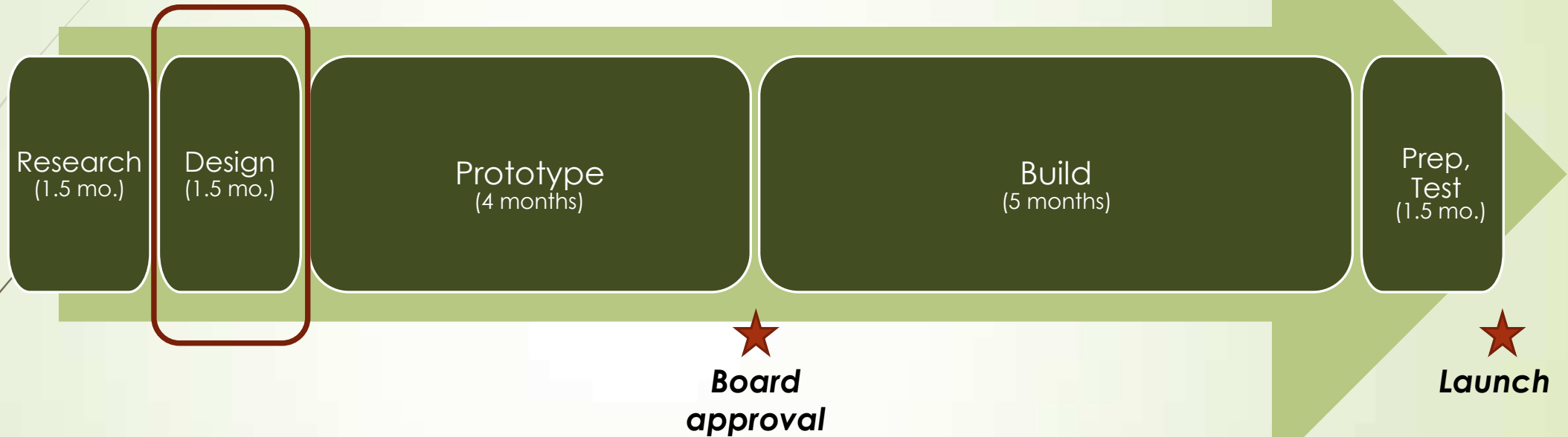
- Squarespace
 - Host site, design templates
- Wufoo
 - Online forms, payments
- Zapier
 - Send information from Wufoo to other places
- SignUp.com
 - Volunteer sign-ups

Support

- “Web Team”
 - 3 members
 - Executive Director*
 - Staff member
 - Tech-minded volunteers
 - Choose tools, train staff, monitor site for consistency

**Not involved with initial redesign*

Process: 13.5 Months



- Evaluate platform options

- Staff sessions (3)

- Chose and test template
- Create Home page
- Create main navigation
- Train staff

- Create remaining pages (~100)

- Domain name control
- Email transfer
- Testing
- Terminate prior host

Design Session #1

- User-centric methodology, define visitor types
- “Homework”: Sites you like, why

Visitor Types

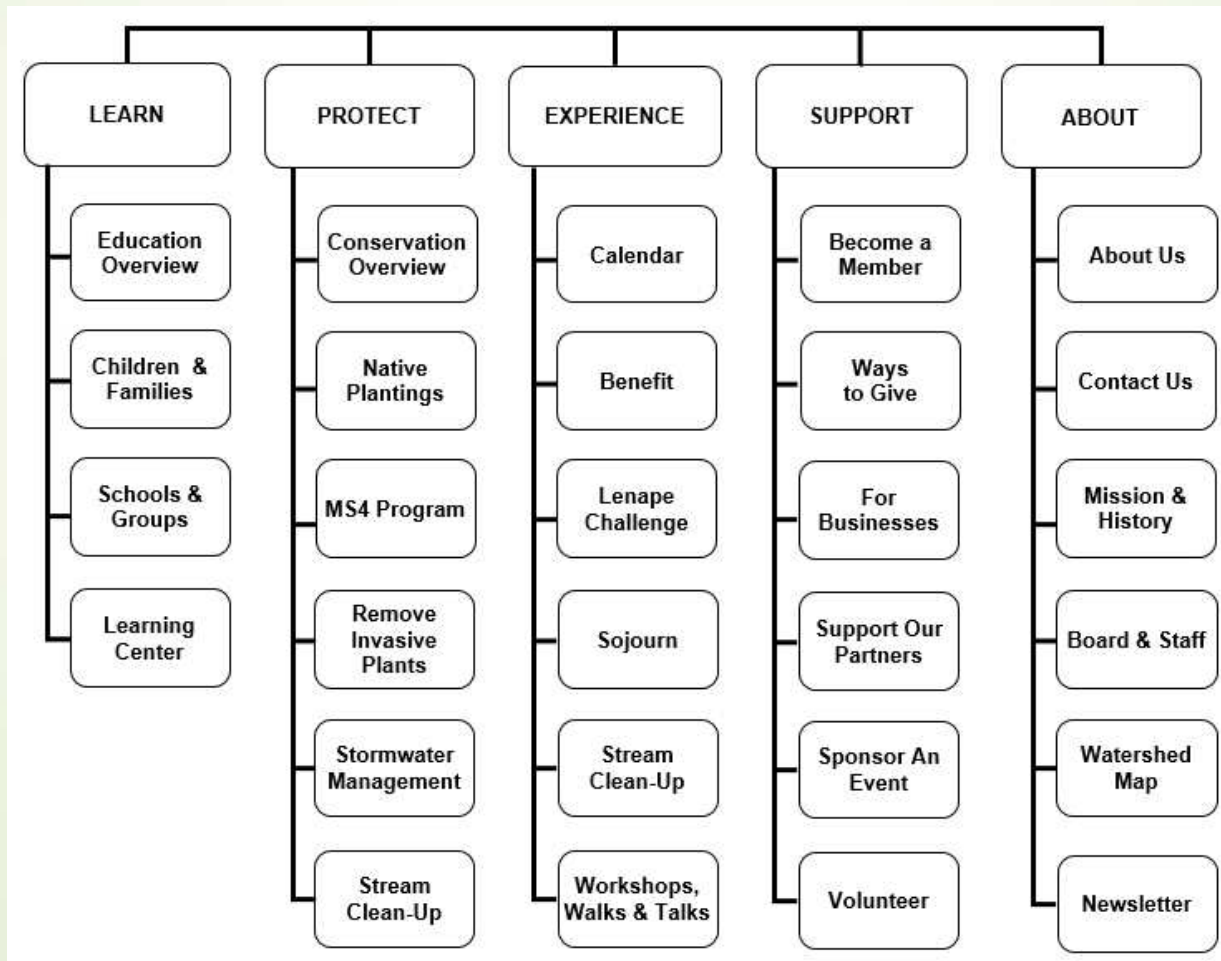
#	Visitor Type	Reason(s) to Use Site
1	"Do Gooders"	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Volunteer for projects, events, activities• Financially support PWC's mission as donors or members
2	Event/Activity Participants	Sign up
3	Municipalities	Join MS4 program
4	Information Seekers (students, general public)	Locate advice
5	Teachers, Youth Group Leaders	Arrange classes, identify resources
6	Businesses, Organizations	Partner with PWC, or sponsor an event

Design Session #2

- Map overall site structure, determine main navigation
- “Homework”: Refine drafts

Site Map, Navigation

- How will visitors find information?

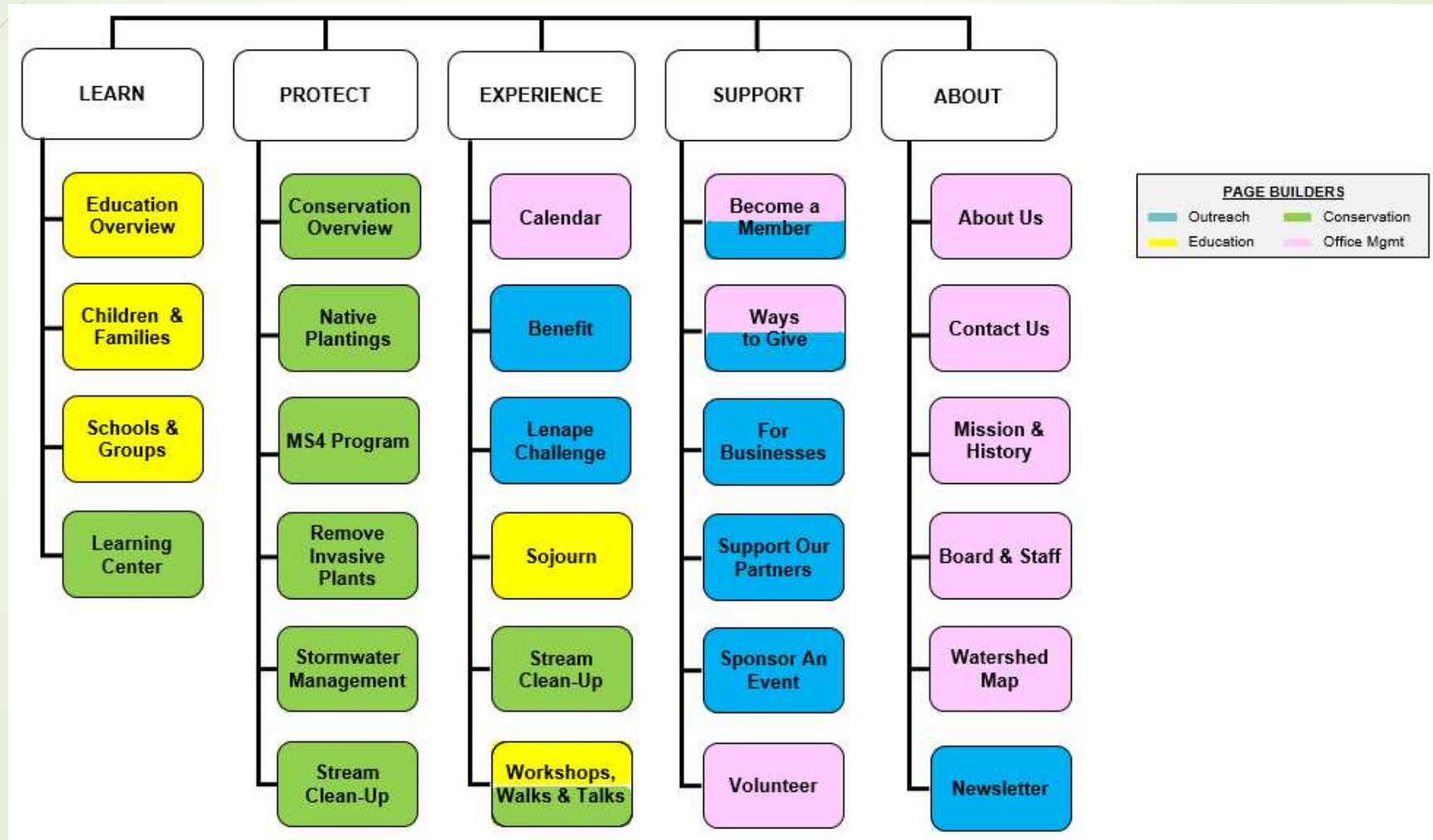


← Main menu

Design Session #3

- Finalize site structure and navigation, build assignments
- “Homework”: Squarespace training

Who's Doing the Work?



Testing

- ▶ Two volunteer testers
 - ▶ Assumed selected visitor personas
 - ▶ Gave informal comments, suggestions
- ▶ Changes, where possible


**Take time to test.
There is no substitute for getting direct user feedback.**


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[About Us](#) | [Education](#) | [Conservation](#) | [Stormwater](#) | [Calendar](#) | [Events](#) | [Partners & Resources](#)

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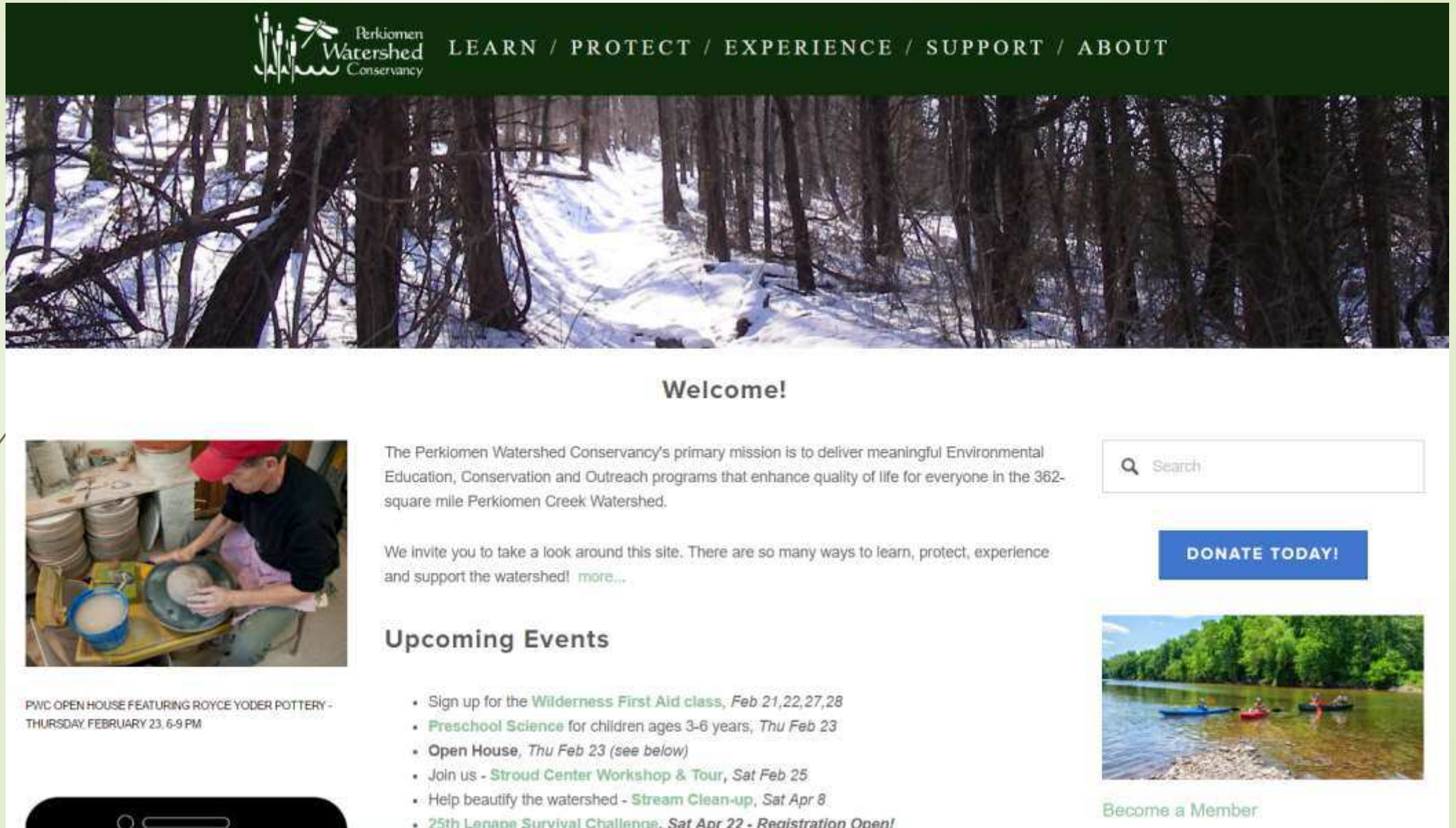
[View All](#)

Events and Classes

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6:30 PM - Special Events
Committee Meeting

“After”

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The screenshot shows the homepage of the Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy. At the top is a dark green header with the organization's logo on the left and the navigation menu "LEARN / PROTECT / EXPERIENCE / SUPPORT / ABOUT" on the right. Below the header is a wide photograph of a snowy forest path. The main content area has a "Welcome!" heading followed by a paragraph about the organization's mission. To the left of this text is a photo of a man in a red cap working with pottery. Below the mission text is another paragraph inviting visitors to explore the site, with a "more..." link. Underneath is a section titled "Upcoming Events" with a bulleted list of activities. On the right side of the page, there is a search bar, a blue "DONATE TODAY!" button, a photo of people kayaking on a river, and a "Become a Member" link. At the bottom left, a portion of a smartphone interface is visible.

Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy

LEARN / PROTECT / EXPERIENCE / SUPPORT / ABOUT

Welcome!

The Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy's primary mission is to deliver meaningful Environmental Education, Conservation and Outreach programs that enhance quality of life for everyone in the 362-square mile Perkiomen Creek Watershed.

We invite you to take a look around this site. There are so many ways to learn, protect, experience and support the watershed! [more...](#)

Upcoming Events

- Sign up for the **Wilderness First Aid class**, Feb 21,22,27,28
- **Preschool Science** for children ages 3-6 years, *Thu Feb 23*
- **Open House**, *Thu Feb 23 (see below)*
- Join us - **Stroud Center Workshop & Tour**, *Sat Feb 25*
- Help beautify the watershed - **Stream Clean-up**, *Sat Apr 8*
- **25th Lenape Survival Challenge**, *Sat Apr 22 - Registration Open!*

PWC OPEN HOUSE FEATURING ROYCE YODER POTTERY - THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 6-9 PM

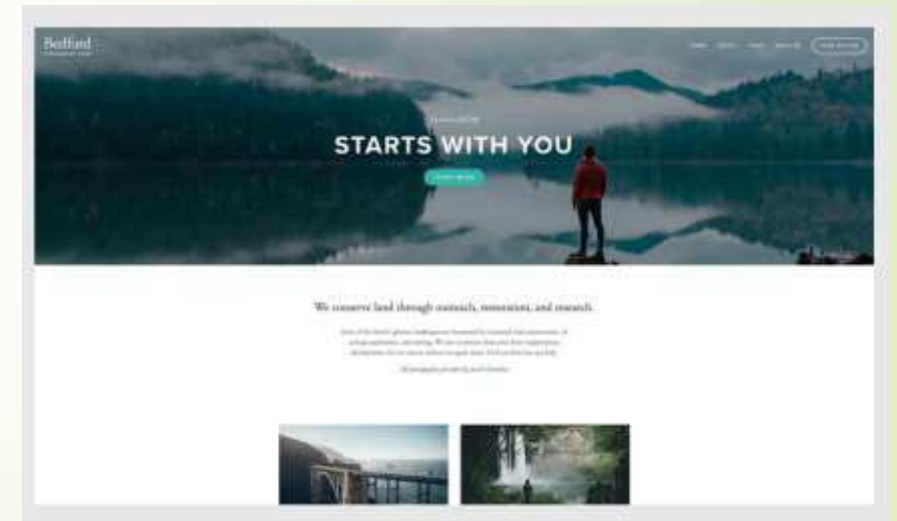
Search

DONATE TODAY!

Become a Member

Phase II

- Re-focus on top visitor types
 - Volunteers, Event/Activity Participants, Municipalities
- Updated look
 - New template
 - Streamlined content
- Home page priorities
 - “Right Now”, “On Deck”
- Mobile optimized
- Testing



Summary

- Know your audience
- Follow design best practices
- Choose a good toolbox
- Get organized
- Test

Recommended Resources

- *Web Design "Gurus"*

- Nielsen Norman Group (NN/g)
 - Jakob Nielsen, Don Norman
 - <https://www.nngroup.com>

- User Interface Engineering
 - Jared Spool
 - <https://www.uie.com/>