

Get Outdoors!

Live Better, Live Maryland.

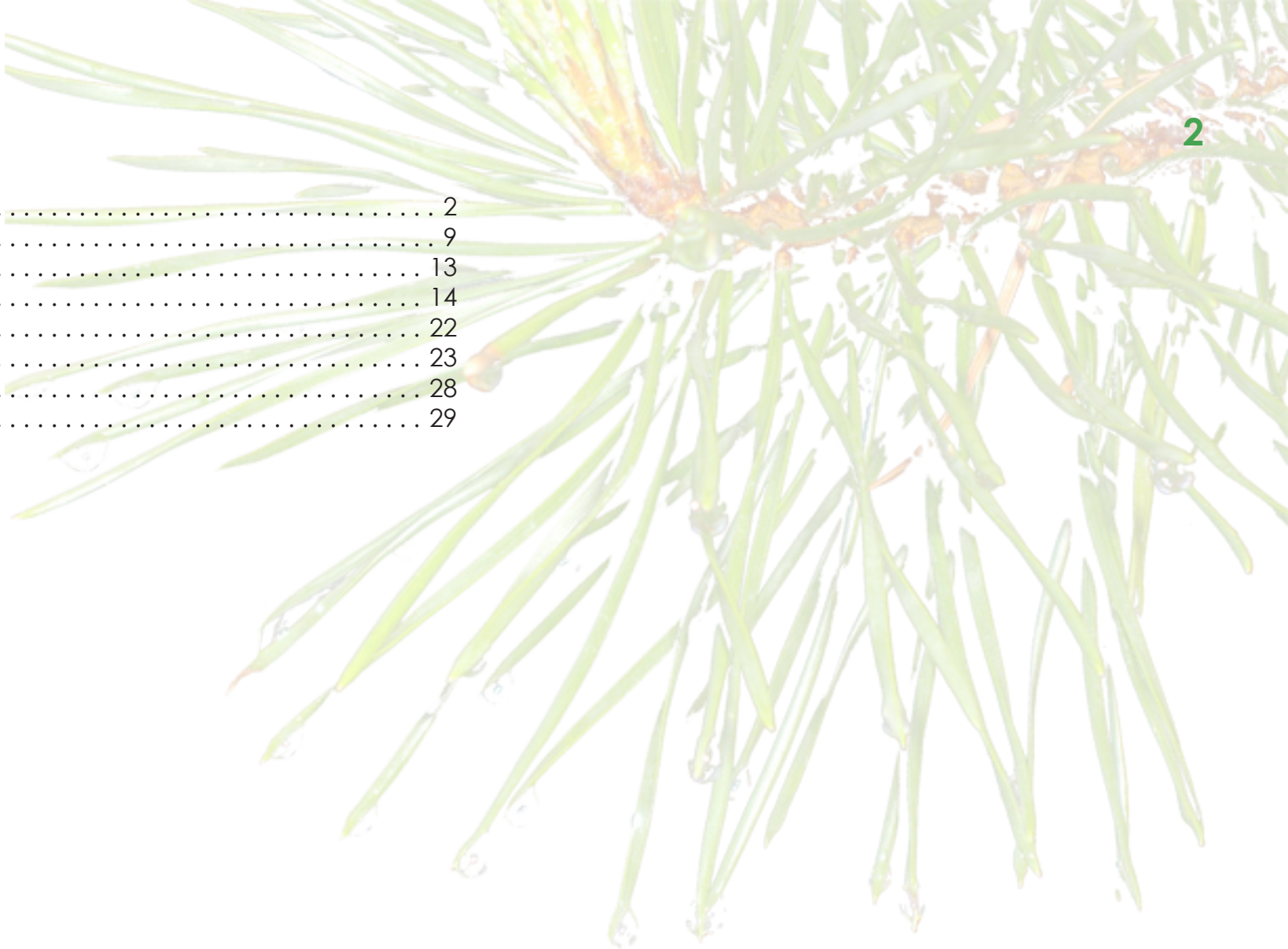
Version 6.0

By Klara Schmitt

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Get Outdoors!



Creative Brief

3

Company Business Objectives

The mission of Get Outdoors! is to raise money for nature programs and environmental legislation within the Baltimore Metropolitan area and get people involved in the process. Get Outdoors! will raise money through paid advertisements that it will run on the online magazine.

Get Outdoors!

Creative Brief

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Project Summary - Purpose

The purpose of the Get Outdoors! online magazine is to promote a healthy lifestyle involving outdoor activity, promote environmental volunteerism, and alert community members to other outdoor-related projects going on in their areas.

Project Summary - Content

While Get Outdoors! primary interest is to raise money and support for the causes and organizations that it endorses, Get Outdoors! hopes to reach a wider spectrum of people by appealing those simply interested in outdoor recreational activities and also by targeting local community projects and events. Content will include regional news, events, classes, interest-groups, and volunteer opportunities, in addition to specific projects and events occurring in by county and within specific communities.

1. *Home*: The main page will contain blurbs, images, and links to the feature article, events, and some aspect of the volunteer page.

Advertisement: Donate or join affiliate organization, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation.

2. *Department: Get Involved & Volunteer*

- Highlight on a specific volunteer opportunity or group

The volunteer group highlighted this month will be the Severn Riverkeeper Program; it'll cover what they do, where they meet, and how to get involved.

- Profile on a volunteer

Aldo Price has been teaching children and adults at the Piney Run Nature Center how to make their own bat houses and bird houses for over 3 years. More on his passion.

- Feedback from volunteers from previous events or response from participants

Response from participants in Baltimore's Alley Gating and/or Greening, featured in last month's article.

Advertisement: Buy quality waders from "Rough Waters Trading Co." Second advertisement for pine seed soap (spruce seeds in biodegradable packaging) from "Back to Nature".

Get Outdoors!

3. *Department: Classes & Activities*

- List of new classes available at Nature Centers around Central Maryland
List of classes offered at Sparks Bank Nature Center, Oregon Ridge, Locus Grove Nature Center, and others...
- Calendar of classes and interest group meetings
- Highlighted interest group
Harford Bird Club, their interests, when and where they meet.

Advertisement: Annual contest for K-8 students to design calendar pages; theme "Clean Water."

4. *Department: Explore Maryland*

- Narrative (and map) by staff or user on a recommended hiking trail, river, or bike route
Rock Creek trail recommended by Jane Sizemore and the New Education Co-op.
- Tips for a specific outdoor activity or statistics on native plants/animals
Tips for backpacking with your dog.
- Review of outdoor-associated product or service by staff
The product reviewed this month is Stone Lion portable Bunsen burner.

Advertisement: Snack on "Nuts About Granola."

5. *Department: News & Events*

- Feature article
This month the article will describe one of the invasive species of plants (Parrot Feather) clogging the Chesapeake Bay, its effects on the ecosystem, and what to do about it.

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- Legislative headlines
Maryland considering widening I-83 and removing natural barriers...
Howard County residents have to pay their weight in garbage...

- Bulletin for events
Mud Pups Fundraiser held at Oregon Ridge Park to raise money for the Maryland SPCA, food, games, raffles, bring your friend-leashed-dog and join us for some fun.

Advertisement: Dock your boat at Saltgrass Marina.

6. Department: In Your Community

- Summaries of specific county-projects
Girl Scout Troop #344 of Harford County is looking to complete their "Cleaner World" badge by planting trees donated by Willow Banks Nursery in the Gunpowder Falls State Park – if you would like to help them out please contact Susan Lay maid at #000-000-0000.

Volunteer Fire Co. #210 is partnering with Safeway and residents of Baltimore country to build a new playground for children at the Robert E. Lee Park. Volunteers or donations appreciate. First build date: Sept. 17, 2009. Contact Hector Edwards at letsdosomethingbetter@aol.com for more information.

Piney Run Park is looking for volunteers to help set up and manage an information booth for their annual Apple Harvest Festival. Contact volunteer@pinerunpark.earthnet.com.

- Classifieds for outdoor-themed goods
-Moderately worn road-bike for sale: \$20. Contact Dave in Columbia, MD.
-Fill dirt: FREE! Come and pick it up. Mays Chapel Road. Call for Elsie.
-Used children's skis with bindings for sale; would make good Christmas present. Red, white, and gray. 142 cm. Westminster, MD. Asking \$89. Call Linda.

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Creative Brief

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- Bulletin for community meetings

Residents of Carroll County are encouraged to come to meetings discussing the future of the aging Pretty Boy Dam.

State congressman Dan Fisher is pushing for the conversion of the NCR trail back into a railroad to create a public transportation method connection PA to MD; residents of Baltimore country have joined with the local chapter of "Bike USA" to resist the proposal.

7. Credits

Perception Tone

Bright, Active

Get Outdoors!

Design Summary

The Get Outdoors! website was designed to be bright and to suggest energy, since Get Outdoors! is all about doing things outside. There should be plenty of vivid imagery of activities and news-worthy items to draw in members of the target audience and get them to participate. The blue to white gradient in the back should start the user with a feeling of being near the sky and as they read, slowly draw them down to the earth in the footer. The added white space gives room for the user to envision the horizon or the area in which an activity might take place.

The colors chosen ought to compliment each other, provide good readability, and suggest the environmental connection with nature. A deep olive green (#719120) and a dark earthy brown (#2b2900) will be used to reference nature, while white (#ffffff) relates to paper and print.

As nature is hardly ever symmetrical, the logotype needs to be loose and slightly uneven to continue to relate to the outdoors theme. This is why FG Jayne Print was selected. It is a typeface that mirrors handwriting and nature, like handwriting, isn't always clean and aligned straight. The tagline on the other hand is more crisp and clean, using the Existence typeface. The tagline has less importance than the name and is primarily present to help the reader identify to what geographic region Get Outdoors! focuses on. However, because of the smaller font size, it had to be clean and straight; otherwise, the viewer would not be able to read it.

Get Outdoors!

Audience

Primary Target Audience

Get Outdoors! aims to reach people in the Baltimore-Metropolitan geographic region who are high school graduates with perhaps, some college in their background. These people are primarily Caucasian, have an average annual income of \$75,963, lie between the ages of twenty-five and sixty-five, and are physically active. They are involved in their community, give their time willingly to good causes, have a passion for nature or the environment, or are enthusiasts in an outdoor hobby or sport. They also tend to stay up-to-date on current events that could impact their lives.

Secondary Target Audience

The secondary audience Get Outdoors! wants to reach are women who act as the primary caregiver and homemaker, and have children above the age of six. Get Outdoors! would like to encourage children to get involved in nature or in outdoor sports at an early age. In addition, Get Outdoors! would like to involve mothers whose children are either in high school or college. These women, perhaps, have some extra time on their hands and Get Outdoors! would like to encourage them to participate in outdoor programs that benefit its affiliates.

Get Outdoors!



Profile – Primary Audience

Name: Daniel Elkridge

Age: 29

Occupation: Sears Customer Service Manager

Location: Monkton, MD

As the head of the Sears Customer Service Department in Hunt Valley, Daniel has to deal with his fair share of grumpy people everyday. While he is content with his job and thrives being around people, he loves to unwind by going for long bike rides on the country roads, the NCR trail, and the occasional off-road trail through the Gunpowder State Park – all close to his home in Monkton, Maryland. He'd prefer doing it with a few people, but none of his buddies are interested and he hasn't really met anyone in his neck of the woods. He decides to get online and see what he can come up with. After a quick search of 'Baltimore County' and 'biking clubs', he comes across Get Outdoors!, where not only does he find activities that appeal to him, but he finds a surprising bit of news about the NCR trail and the possibility of turning it back into a railroad. Daniel isn't super keen on that idea and would prefer the trail stay part of the park system and he quickly writes down the information to get involved with the bike group that intends to fight the new proposal.

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Profile – Secondary Audience

Name: Janet Silvereed

Age: 48

Occupation: Advertising Consultant

Location: Hampstead, MD

Janet Silvereed is a mother of two who lives in Carroll County. She is forty-eight years old, Caucasian, married, and her family's annual income is about \$69,940. Both of her children are in college and while Janet works part-time as an Advertising consultant for the Westminster Farm Museum, she'd like to pick up a little volunteering here and there. She likes the Farm Museum environment, but she would rather do something more hands-on. She starts asking around and a co-worker recommends the online Get Outdoors! magazine. She visits the web site and while she is unable to find anything for Carroll County under the "Get Involved & Volunteer" section, she discovers a volunteer opportunity for the Apple Harvest Festival at Piney Run Park in "In Your Community". She decides to do it and see whether she'd like to continue volunteering for the Piney Run Nature Center. She bookmarks the website and copies down the contact email address.

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Profile – Random Audience

Name: Sydney Roanoak

Age: 34

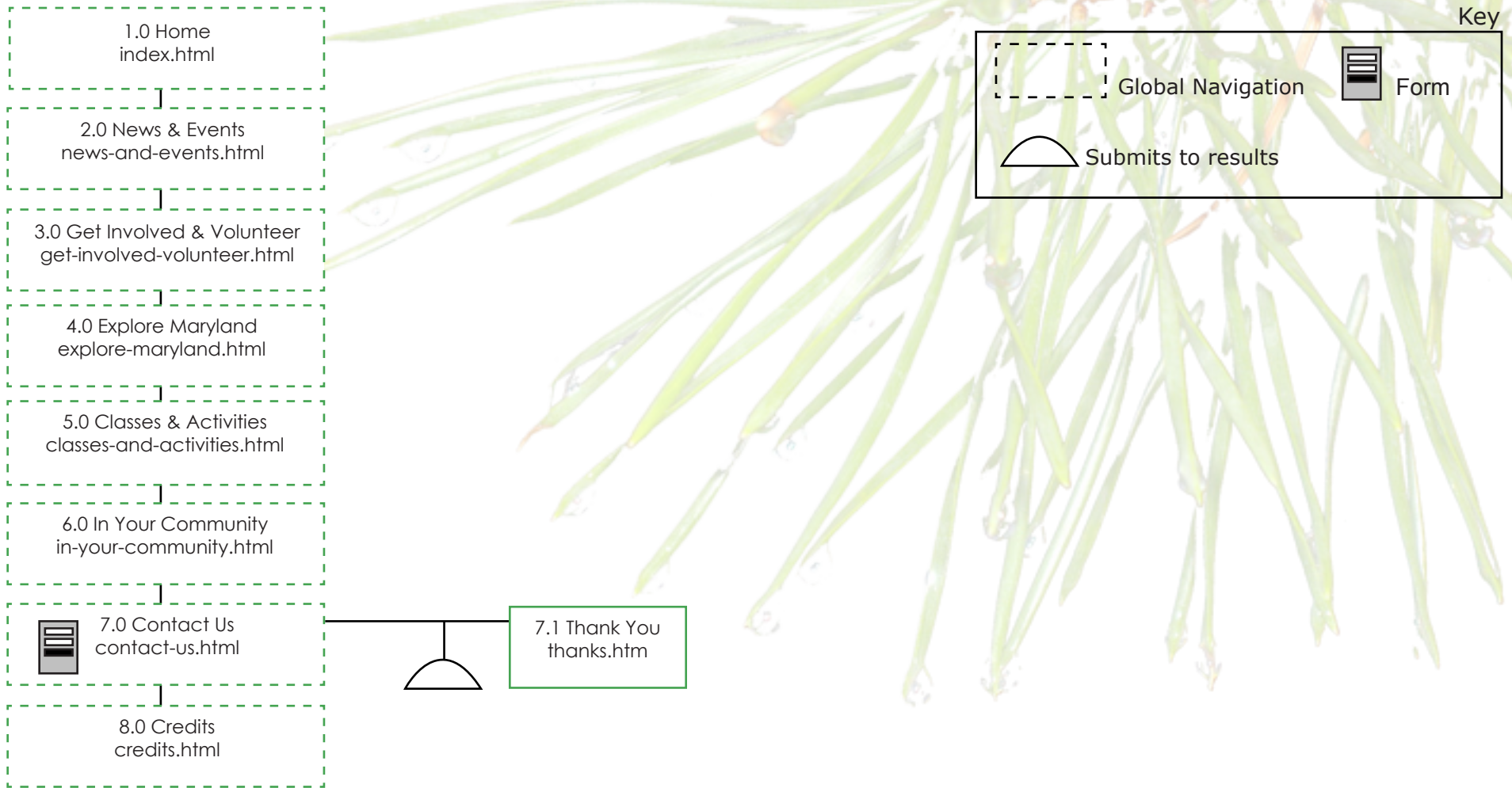
Occupation: Homemaker

Location: Loch Raven, Maryland

Sydney is the mother of two children, ages eight and ten, whom she home educates. She regularly meets up with a co-operative group so that her children can play with others around the same age. Sydney and the other parents take turns coming up with educational or fitness-related field trips and Sydney's turn is up next. Sydney gets online to search for short, kid-friendly hiking trips around the Loch Raven Reservoir and in doing so she runs across the Get Outdoors! website archive of recommended trails. Sydney then sees the link for "Classes & Activities" at the top of the magazine and on that page, she finds the perfect field trip – a school program offered by the Oregon Ridge Nature Center called "Predator/Prey" and as a bonus, Sydney knows that Oregon Ridge also has a big playground the kids can go to afterward.

Get Outdoors!

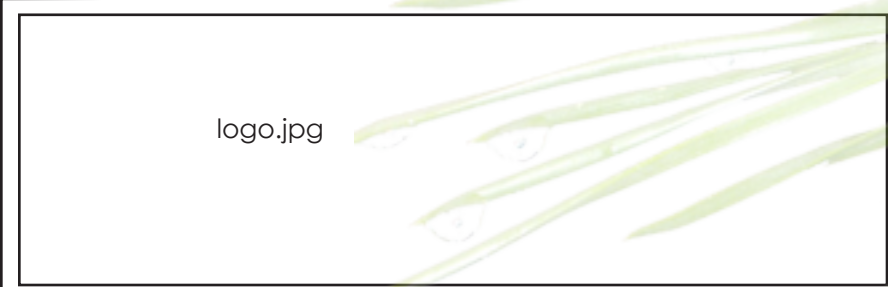
Navigation Map



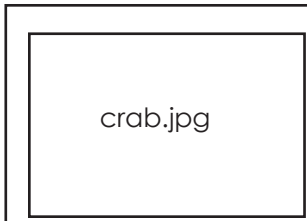
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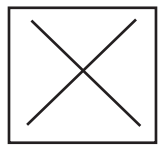
▶ Home



Ready, set, clean rivers!

In 2003, according to the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, scientists discovered one of the largest dead zones ever recorded in the Bay and the Clean Water Act lists the Bay as an impaired water body. Dead zones have killed fish, plants, and even the blue crab. Dead zones are areas of no or low dissolved water oxygen. But not everybody is content to watch our rivers and lakes die. Enter the Annapolis River Guard. Read more here...

Quiz
Can you tell which one of these is an invasive species to Maryland?

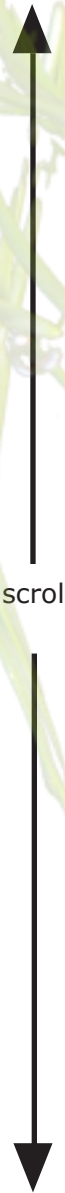
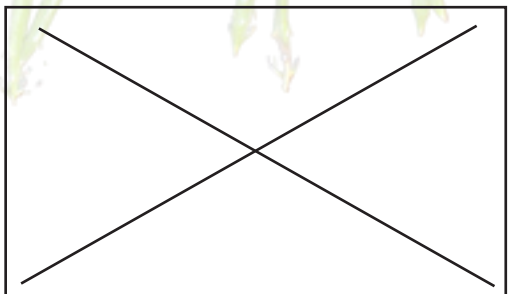


Is it this butterfly?

Round-Up

- 9.14.09 - Wine & Cheese in the Woods (Sponsored by Birch Hills Winery).
- 9.17.09 - Build date for new playground at Robert E. Lee Park.
- 9.18.09 - Volunteers wanted for Apple Festival at Pinery Run Park.

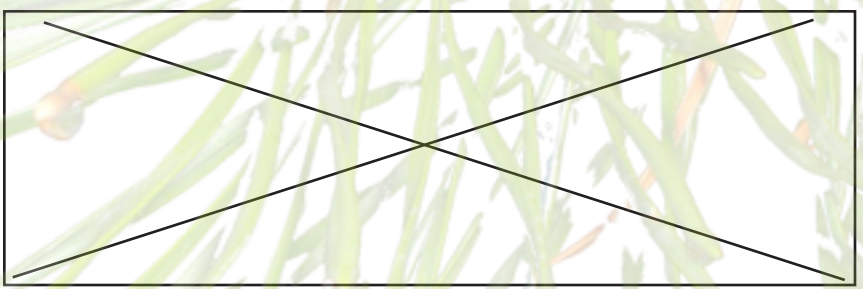
ADVERTISEMENT



Get Outdoors!

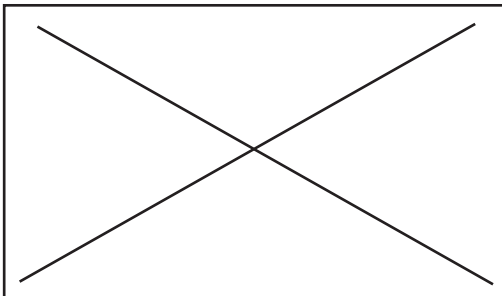
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News & Events

MD Event:
Mud Pups Fundraiser



When: October 1st 2009
Where: Oregon Ridge
Time: 11am to 5pm

Bring your furry, friendly buddy (on a leash) for a day of fun and games!

News Bytes



Baltimore city representative, Meeks, has proposed widening I-83 in accommodate heavier traffic coming in towards Baltimore from Southern York County,

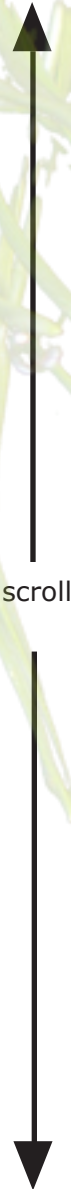


Will and Gina Lupus are fighting neighbors and council representatives in Cedar Cherry (Howard County) over their right to affix a windmill.

Walking Fish?

-Written by Klara Schmitt

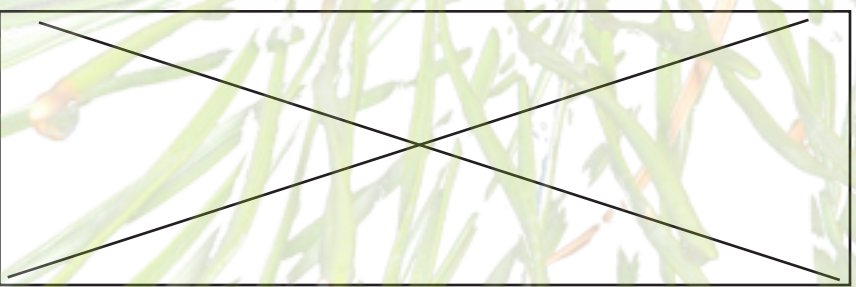
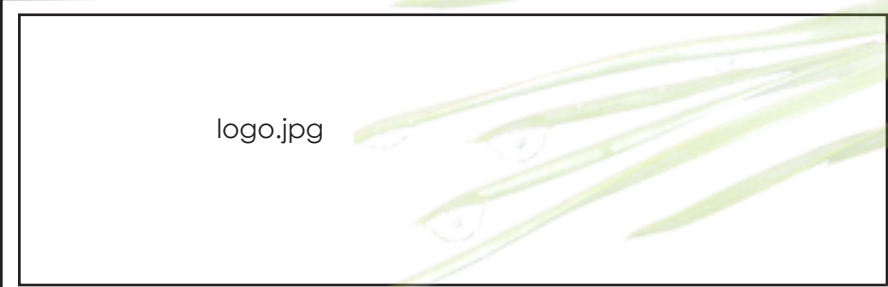
The day fish can walk will cost us a pretty penny. While Maryland is vulnerable to a number of invasive species of plants and animals, the most unusual and potentially threatening discovery within the last three years was of the snakehead fish found within a privately owned pond that lay within the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The snakehead fish, which breeds rapidly and is capable of taking out all top-level predators, was considered an immediate threat.



Get Outdoors!

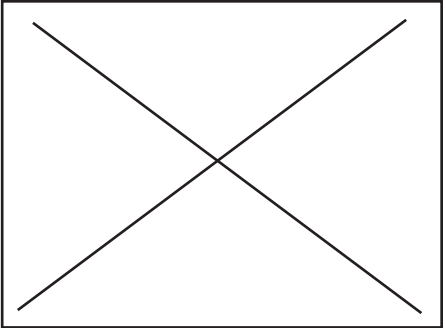
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▶ Get Involved & Volunteer

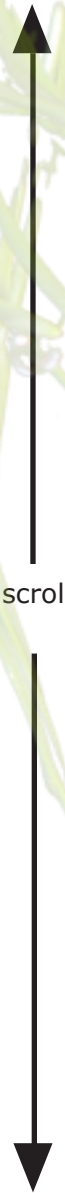
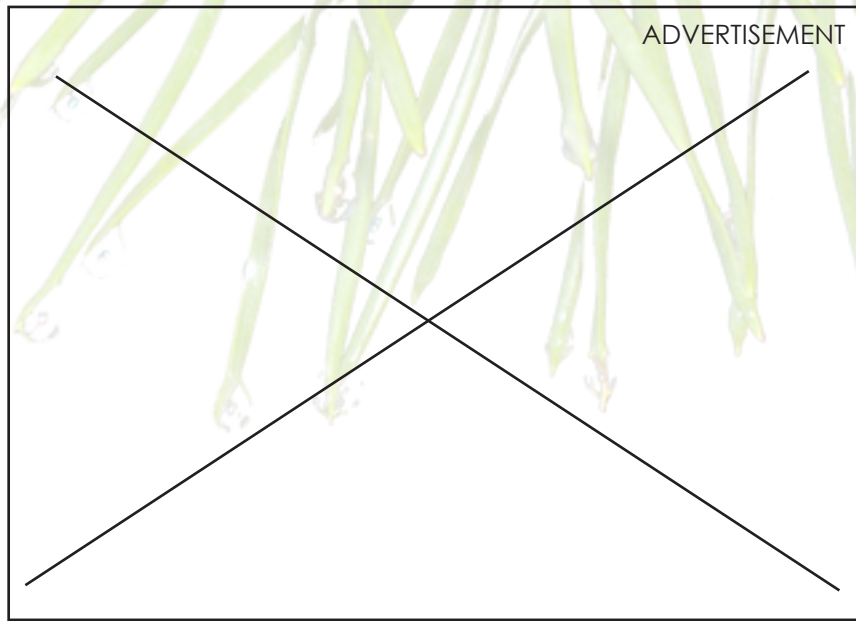
Annapolis River Guard



All mammals need oxygen. The thing is, so do fish. We often forget this, because they are under water and we aren't.

However, this is a problem for fish and other organisms in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, because the

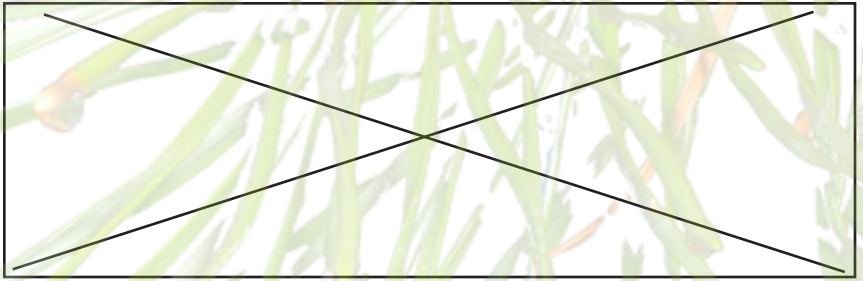
Clean Water Act has declared large regions of the watershed "impaired." One such body is the Challenger River, which is considered unhealthy because of its low levels of dissolved oxygen (what the fish and other underwater wildlife need) and the river's dead zones (areas having no dissolved oxygen).



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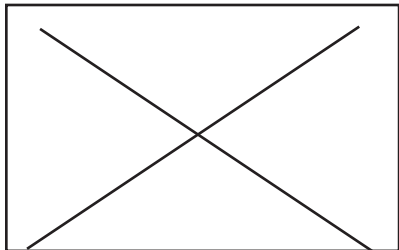


▶ Explore Maryland

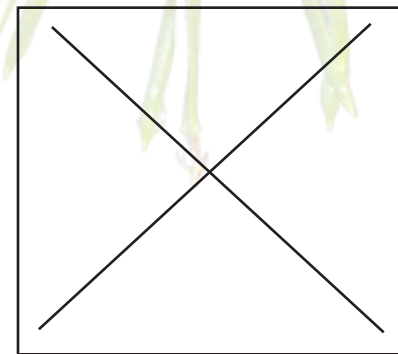
Trails & Rivers - Review

Where: The Falling Branch Area of Rocks State Park (Harford County)
Hike: White Tail & Kilgore Falls
Season: Late Summer
Recommend by: Jane Sizemore

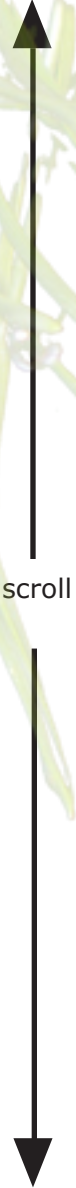
This past Sunday morning was relatively cool and my husband, our dog, and I decided to get outside and get some exercise. We just moved to Baltimore county about two years and while we've wandered around local trails, we wanted to try something new. Both my husband and I really enjoy hiking by rivers during the warmer months and Owl, our Austrian Cattle Dog, much prefers when we hike where he can get soaking wet and covered mud (although, I should note that Rock State Park requires pets be on leash). Some of our friends had recommended Rocks State Park and Kilgore Falls, which is Maryland's section highest vertical drop waterfall. So we packed up some granola, water, and dog treats and made a morning of it.



While the morning was still cool we did the White Trail, which is a...



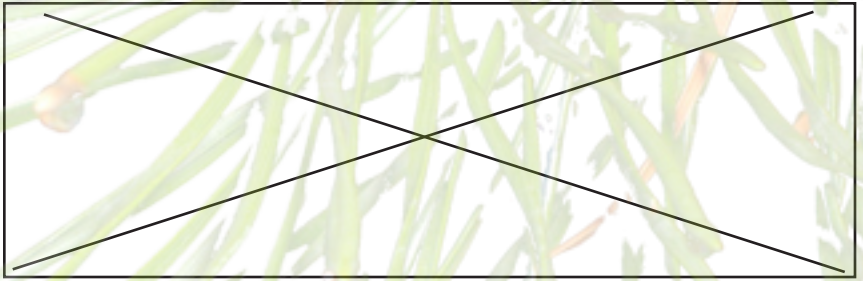
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Get Outdoors!

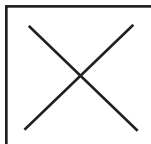
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▶ Classes & Activites

Ready to learn something new?



Join Fern Bank Nature Center for morning canoe trips down the gunpowder river with a stop at the Bunker Hill Park for a light picnic brunch. Every other Saturday morning from September through October (8am to 11am). Cost: \$20 per person per session.

All About Bees

Hike to Beaver Dams

Basic Astronomy

Making Stationary

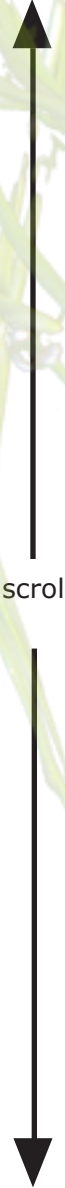
Flyfishing

Conowingo Bird Club

We meet at the nature center on the Maryland side of the Conowingo Dam the second and fourth Saturdays of the month for a one to two hour hike around the Susquehanna river looking for bald eagle nests and other local birds. Come join us. It's free! You get good



exercise, experience nature full on, see beautiful birds, and meet new, interesting people. Many of our members are amateur photographers and will gladly share tips with the aspiring bird photographer. Meetings are rain or shine. Bring binoculars and a water bottle...

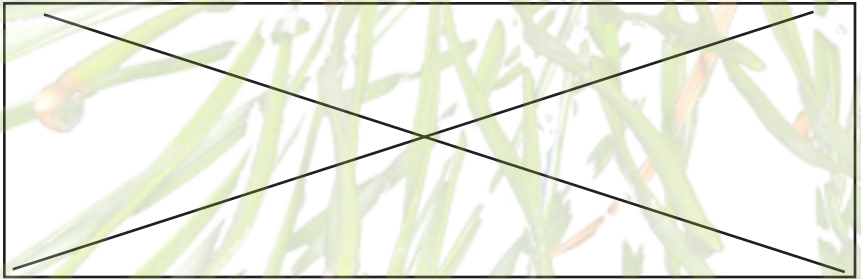


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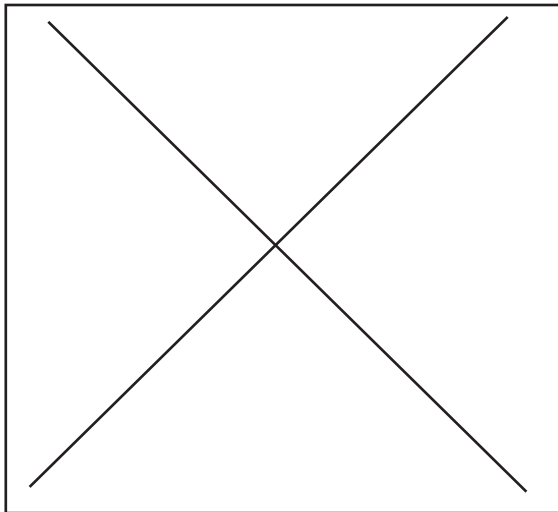
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▶ In Your Community



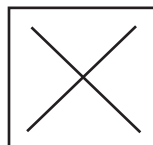
Classified Ads

Moderately worn road-bike for sale: \$20.
Contact Dave in Columbia, MD.

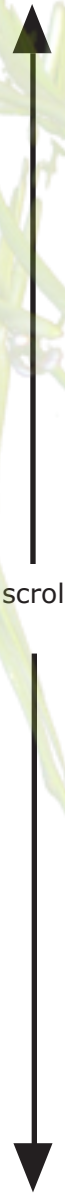
Community Meetings

- Residents of Carroll County are encouraged to come to meetings discussing the future of the aging Pretty Boy Dam. Meeting at 8 p.m. at Friendship Heights High School.
- State congressman Dan Fisher is pushing for the conversion of the NCR trail back into a railroad to create a public transportation method connection PA to MD; residents of Baltimore county have joined with the local chapter of "Bike USA" to resist the proposal. To learn more or get involved, contact Bike USA @ 000-000-0000 or bikeusa@fakeemail.com.

County Specific Projects



Girl Scout Troop #344 of Harford County is looking to complete their "Cleaner World" badge by planting trees donated by Willow Banks Nursery in the Gunpowder Falls State Park – if you would like to help them out please contact Susan Laymaid at #000-000-0000.



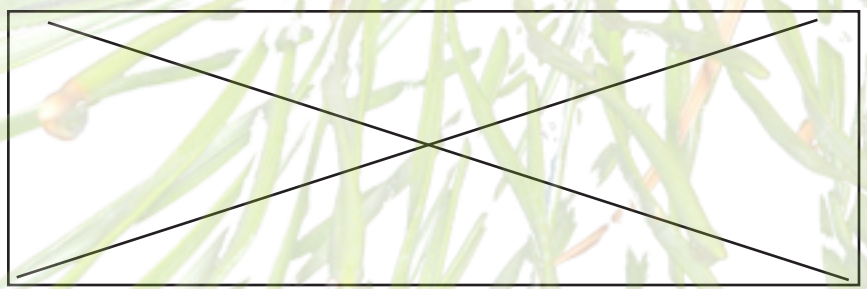
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Wireframes - Contact Us

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▶ Contact Us

Care to reach us?
Call us: 666-666-66**
or email us: Get Outdoors!

[[Form Section]]

Name	<input type="text"/>
Subject	<input type="text"/>
Comment	<input type="text"/>



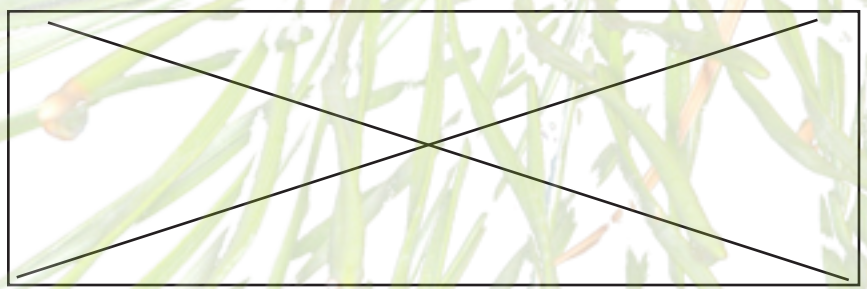
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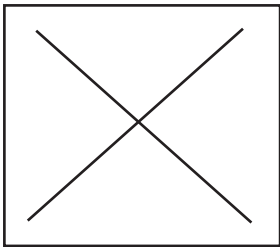
Wireframes - Credits

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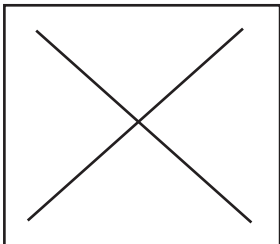
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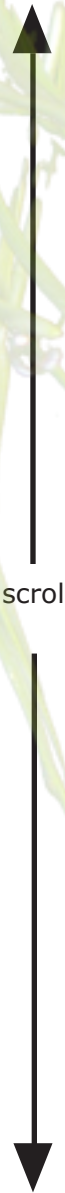
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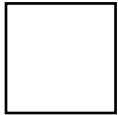
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Get Outdoors!

Styles

Colors



#ffffff



#2b2900



#000000



#719120



#bbcc32



#c2dbef

Font Styles

h1, h2, h3, h4, h5, h6 -- Verdana, Arial, sans-serif
body -- Verdana, Arial, sans-serif, 9pt
footer links -- Verdana, Arial, sans-serif, 9pt

Get Outdoors!

Introduction

Get Outdoors! is a website promoting environmental activism, outdoor volunteering, outdoor sports and activities, and involvement with local community groups within the Baltimore-Metropolitan corridor. The following survey examines the website from the perspective of a potential user based on a pre-set list of criteria in four categories: design, content, usability, and overall experience. This evaluation checks the website for consistency and makes sure it's meeting the requirements of the target audience. The data presented will discuss how well the Get Outdoors! website did on the evaluation, as well as indicate what changes will be made as a result of the findings.

Result Analysis

The key areas in which Get Outdoors! received lower markings were in content and usability, primarily due to the lack of headers identifying what page the user is presently on. While the navigation menu does indicate this with a bold font weight on the current page, it is not substantial enough for the user to notice, it is not 508 compliant, and it makes the navigation menu shift slightly from page to page, which caught the attention of the reviewers. Furthermore, the font-choices on advertisements were considered hard to read and in some cases the advertisements were not distinguishable from the general content and, with the quiz on the index page, the reviewers thought that the white space where the answers would later appear was distracting. Finally, the "Know What's Happening" banner image was inconsistent with previous images, which were more down to earth. The "Know What's Happening" banner was too loud and too brightly colored compared with other images.

Overall, the Get Outdoors! website received good markings in logo design, general reader content and design form and color and its primary failing was a lack of headers or identifier for which page the user was at presently, thus making it difficult for the user to determine the theme of the content on that particular section.

One recommendation received after the evaluation was to move the month and date onto the same line as the volume number for smoother readability. This would also make room in the banner for the page title identifier, which would make it much easier for users to know which page they were on and what type of content they are reading.

Get Outdoors!

Heuristics Evaluation (on version 5.0)

Methodology

The evaluation was formed by a group of three peers familiar with key usability criteria. This form included questions answered by a rating system of a 1-5 intensity, a comment box on the end of each section for further explanation of why certain numbers were selected, and some short answer questions at the beginning of the survey.

Being unable to locate reviewers that met the exact audience profile, the evaluation was performed by a small focus group of peers who tried to review the website from the mentality of the selected target audience.

Results

DESIGN							
Is the website consistent throughout each page?	Not Consistent	1	2	3	4	5	Very Consistent
Does the logo represent the website?	Not at all!	1	2	3	4	5	Yes it does!
Do the colors represent the website content/mission?	Not at all!	1	2	3	4	5	Yes they do!
Are the images related to the subject?	Not at all!	1	2	3	4	5	Yes!
Are the images clear/high quality?	Not at all!	1	2	3	4	5	Yes!
Does the page load quickly?	Not at all!	1	2	3	4	5	Yes!
Can the page be resized well?	Not at all!	1	2	3	4	5	Yes!
Does the layout vary from page to page?	Not at all!	1	2	3	4	5	Yes!

Table 1.1

Get Outdoors!

Results Continued

CONTENT							
Is the information unique, fresh, and new?	Not Consistent	1	2	3	4	5	Very Consistent
Can you distinguish the ads from the general content?	Not at all!	1	2	3	4	5	Yes it does!
Is the text readable?	Not at all!	1	2	3	4	5	Yes they do!
Is the content well organized?	Not at all!	1	2	3	4	5	Yes!
Is the content east to understand?	Not at all!	1	2	3	4	5	Yes!
Are there headers and subheaders?	Not at all!	1	2	3	4	5	Yes!
Does the content reflect the goals of the site?	Not at all!	1	2	3	4	5	Yes!
Does the content of each page have a recognizable theme?	Not at all!	1	2	3	4	5	Yes!
Does the content meet the needs of the audience?	Not at all!	1	2	3	4	5	Yes!
Does the information appear to be researched and well-documented?	Not at all!	1	2	3	4	5	Yes!
Was the footer helpful?	Not helpful at all!	1	2	3	4	5	Very helpful

Table 1.2

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Results Continued

USABILITY							
How easy is the primary navigation to use?	Very hard	1	2	3	4	5	Very easy
Is the global navigation consistent?	Not at all!	1	2	3	4	5	Yes!
How easy is it to tell what page you are on?	Very hard	1	2	3	4	5	Very easy
Was the site 508 compliant?	Not at all!	1	2	3	4	5	Yes!
How easy is it to find the content that you are looking for?	Very hard	1	2	3	4	5	Very easy

Table 1.3

OVERALL							
Is the website attractive?	Not at all!	1	2	3	4	5	Yes!
Is the website distracting or uncomfortable?	Very distracting	1	2	3	4	5	Not at all!
Is the website generally well organized?	Not at all!	1	2	3	4	5	Yes!
Would you visit the site again?	Very hard	1	2	3	4	5	Very easy
Is the site lacking anything? Explain below.	Yes	1	2	3	4	5	No

Table 1.4

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Conclusion

Based on the evaluation, headers must be added, ads must be moved and distinguished from general content, the name of the “Know What’s Happening” section must be changed, as well as the banner image. The page header will be placed into the box currently occupied by the month and the month will be bumped up to the top of the green box in the banner. The image in the “Get Involved” banner may be swapped in for the current “Know What’s Happening” banner, if a better photo of volunteers can be located. The “Know What’s Happening” section will be renamed “News & Events” for clarity of the user, in the navigation menu. The ad on the main page will be moved to the right, since the reviewers were initially confused as to whether it was part of the round-up or not. The text in the Saltgrass Marina ad will be larger and less decorative and the kerning will be expanded for the Chessie Group ad to help with readability. The footer will be fixed to have the text align in the center as per recommendation, the horizontal rules on the “Get Involved” page removed, and the image of the crab and the banner of the river on the index page replaced with a less stretched or higher quality image.

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Usability Testing Results in 6.0

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Usability Testing

The previously mentioned version 5.0 underwent another round of changes after usability testing was performed on it. Users commented that the navigation menu got lost in the banner and that they wanted the quotes to be clickable. In addition, most users missed the page headers and didn't think the "you are here" indicators were prominent enough. Finally, beyond the "Explore Maryland" link users were not completely sure of the geographic region being highlighted. This resulted in the changes that brought forth version 6.0.

The navigation menu font size was increased and the entire menu was moved to the top of the screen and allowed to span the entire width of the banner for increased visibility. The banner was simplified by removing the quotes all together, adding the tagline, which describes the geographic region, and moving the page titles down between the banner and content. The page titles were changed to a straight-forward sans-serif and the arrow indicates the current page. In addition, the hover state of the links in primary navigation stays active while the user is on that selected page.

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