

Sno-King Watershed Council

Website Redesign Case Study

Design 360

Winter 2023

By Duncan Bennett





The Project

On a timetable of four weeks, designers were tasked with executing a website redesign for a nonprofit organization of their choosing. Requirements were an assessment of the current site, market research, usability testing, and a functional redesigned mobile and desktop prototype.

I selected Sno-King Watershed Council as my organization. Based in the Seattle area, SKWC is a grassroots, community-oriented organization tasked with the stewardship of local watershed resources. They advocate for legislation, organize cleanup projects, review construction permits for violations, and offer classes on water monitoring.



The Problem

Sno-King Watershed Council's website is their organization's hub. They use it to keep members informed, post project updates, and coordinate classes.

The current site does a poor job of accomplishing any of these tasks. The homepage displays only their blog posts, which distract from their services and purpose as an organization. The rest of the content is buried in poorly organized submenus with an abundance of links leading the user away from the page or directing them to contact specific personal emails for more information.

The Solution

A navigational overhaul is in order to help clean up the site and bring more relevant and appealing content to the front. Keeping the appropriate amount of emphasis on content like the donate button while making space for information about the organization's mission and accomplishments is the best course of action. Providing a channel for curious users to sign up for classes and volunteer opportunities is also a must, as the website currently does little to promote these services.

Research

Original Site

Built out of a WordPress template, the current website leaves something to be desired. The front page consists of a selection of recent blog posts all from the same person, presumably one of the founders of SKWC, with topics ranging from important organization achievements to a poetic recounting of a walk they took.

Clearly there is room to shuffle some of the more important site features to more useful locations. SKWC does a lot of good for the community. The current website does not effectively convey that.



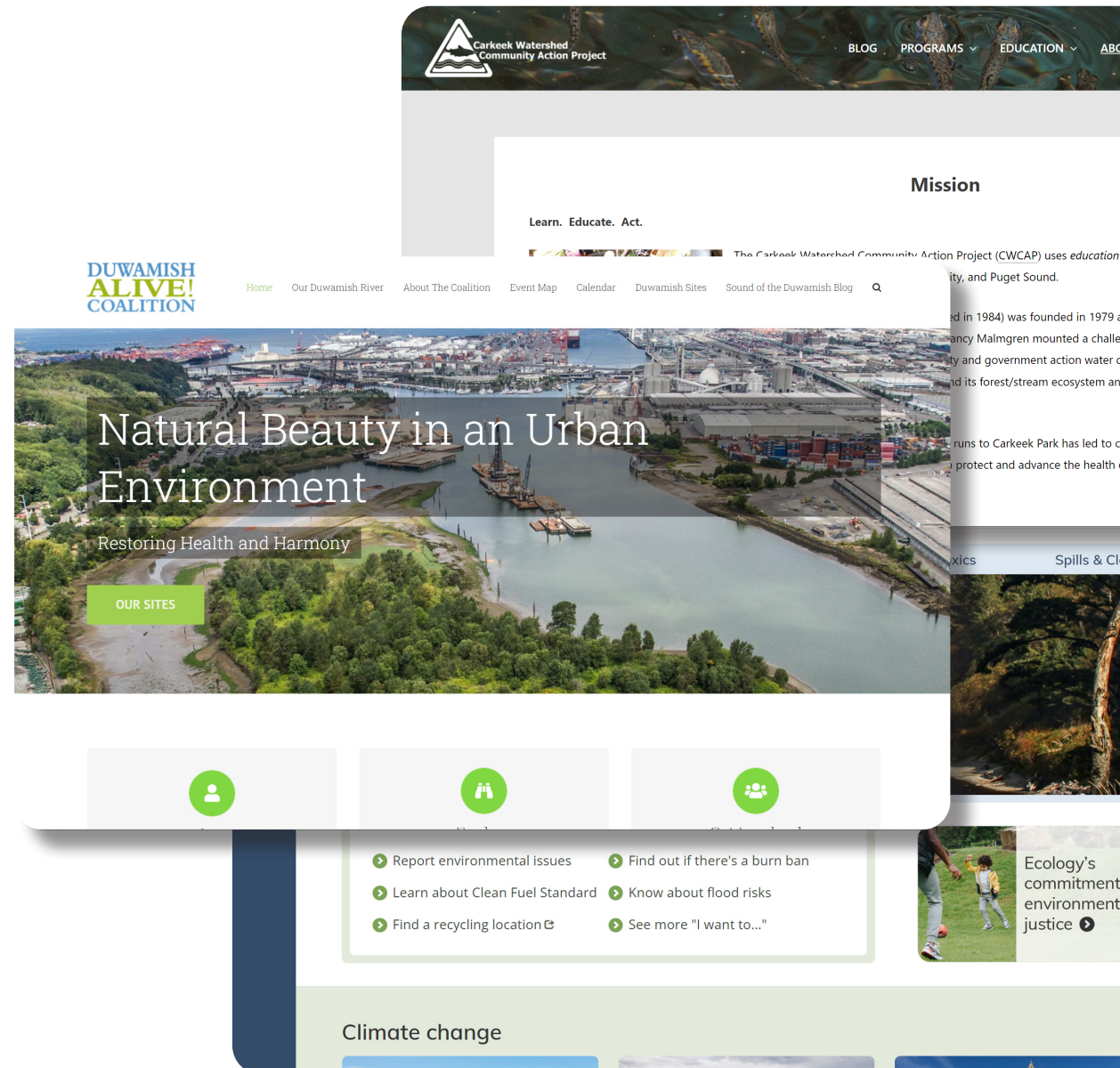


Research

Competition

Existing sites for other watershed and waterway conservation organizations (nonprofit or otherwise) possess the clean visual organization expected from public institutions. Indirect competition such as initiatives under a city, state, or federal umbrella are typically incorporated into the parent site as a secondary or even tertiary page. Direct competition also exists at the grassroots level and tends to consist of similar template-based layouts with minimal branding and lackluster information architecture.

There is certainly an opportunity to create something unique in this space. A fresh and modern website is often reserved for large, trendy corporations, but there is no reason a small nonprofit can't have a stylish digital impression as well.





Audience

Target Audience

SKWC is an all-inclusive organization. They provide opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to participate in ecological conservation and activism.

However, there are two main groups which I believe deserve consideration when designing a new website. One is conscientious adults with disposable income. This group is more likely to donate to nonprofits, especially ones that adhere to their values and affect their local communities. The other group is elementary to university age students. This group is likely to be enrolled in or looking for local volunteer opportunities. In fact, SKWC already caters towards the younger demographic with several of their Water Watchers programs.



Personas



Jennifer Barlowe

52 year-old Female
Married with 2 kids
340k/yr household

"You get what you give!"

Hobbies: Backpacking, writing, community engagement, gardening, pet care

Values: Honesty, family, environmentalism, altruism

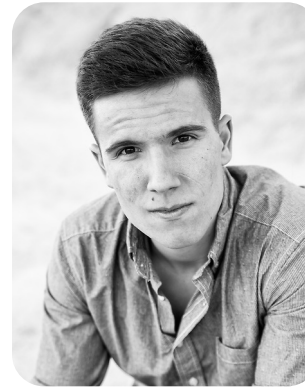
Life Goals: Travel the country, become a published author, leave a positive community legacy

Touchpoints: Learn about SKWC's accomplishments, donate

Product Expectations: Easy to use, secure, reputable

Pain Points: Small text, confusing websites, suspicious links

Media use: iPhone 14 Pro, Microsoft Surface Pro 8, Facebook, LinkedIn



Lukas Jarozs

22 year-old Male
Single
\$19.30/hr wage

"Honestly, I'm just tryna graduate"

Hobbies: Skateboarding, working out, working, amateur music production

Values: Loyalty, transparency, responsiveness

Life Goals: Graduate SU with a bachelor's degree in environmental science, find a girlfriend, write a drum & bass album

Touchpoints: Register for volunteer work with SKWC

Product Expectations: Clear organization, straightforward user flow, visually appealing

Pain Points: "Ugly design", confusing registration, contacting strangers

Media use: Galaxy S21, Macbook Air, Instagram, BeReal, Snapchat



Goals & Strategy

Business Goals

1. Grow membership
2. Increase donations
3. Increase awareness
4. Promote envr. stewardship
5. Influence legislation

Brand Goals

1. Overhaul website
2. Represent achievements
3. Positive social image
4. Social media presence
5. Simplify navigation

User Goals

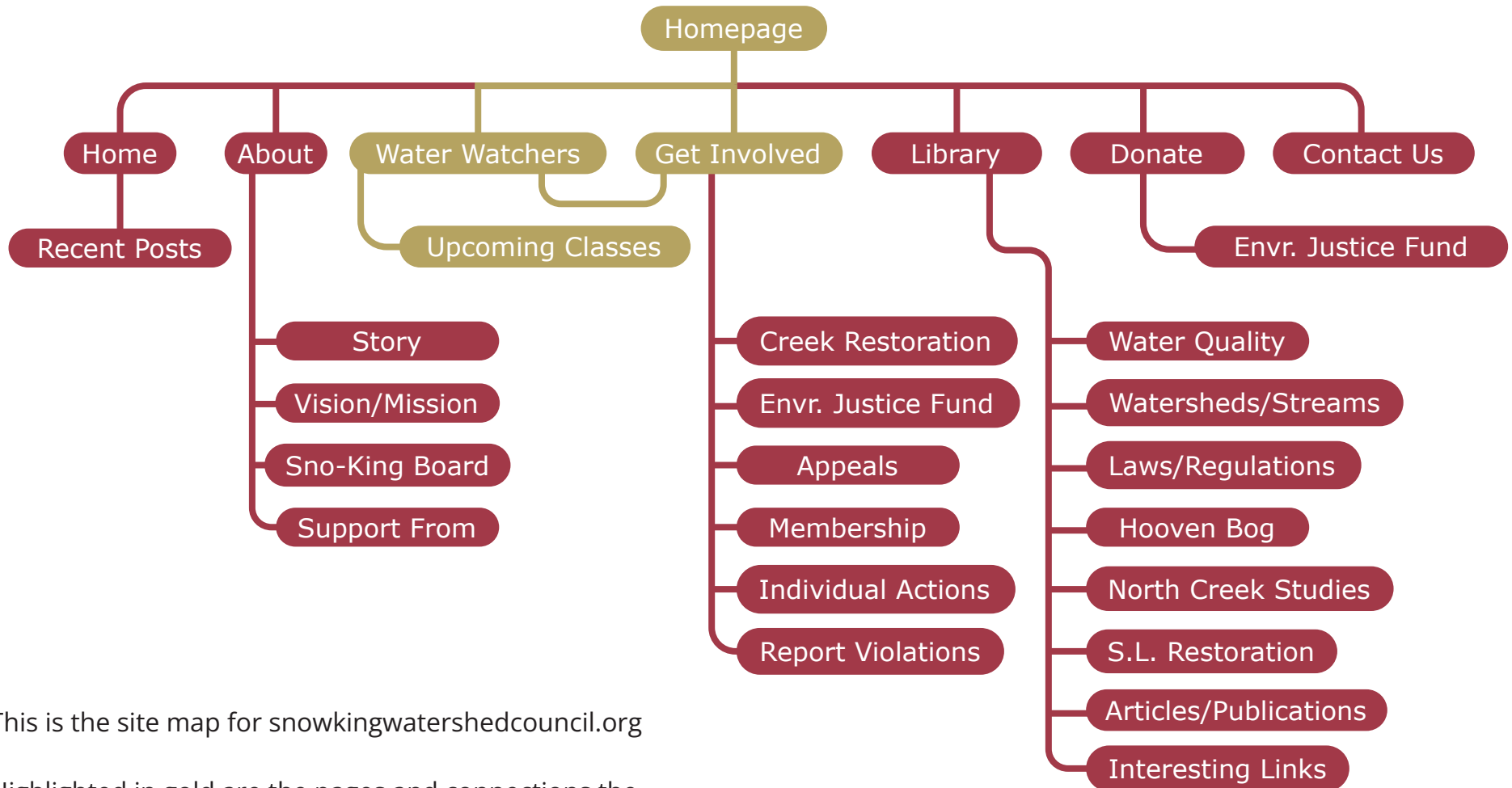
1. Donate
2. Register for volunteer work
3. Register for classes
4. Share content
5. Sense of accomplishment

Strategy

To accommodate the target audience and their objectives, the site redesign will increase ease of use across the board. The navigation system will be completely reworked to focus on streamlining the user flows towards the most common elements: donations, signing up for classes, and learning about the organization. Visual identity will be updated to match the contemporary digital environment, and SKWC will receive a new brand identity with unique colors and visual language.



Site Map

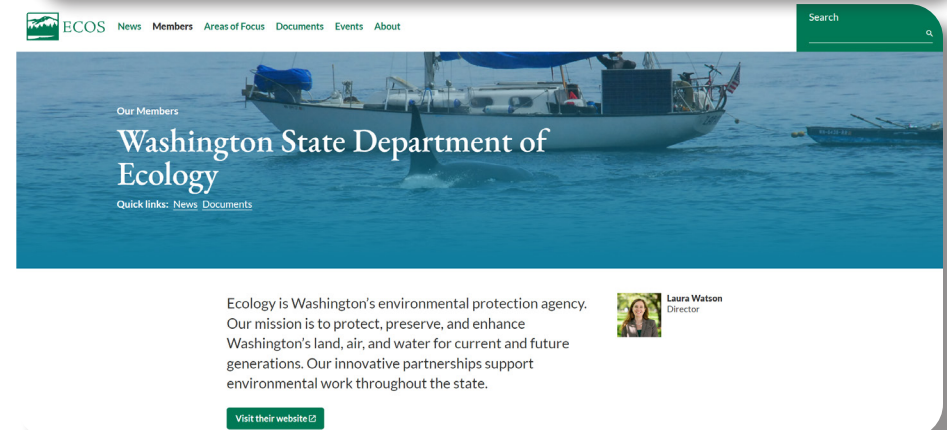
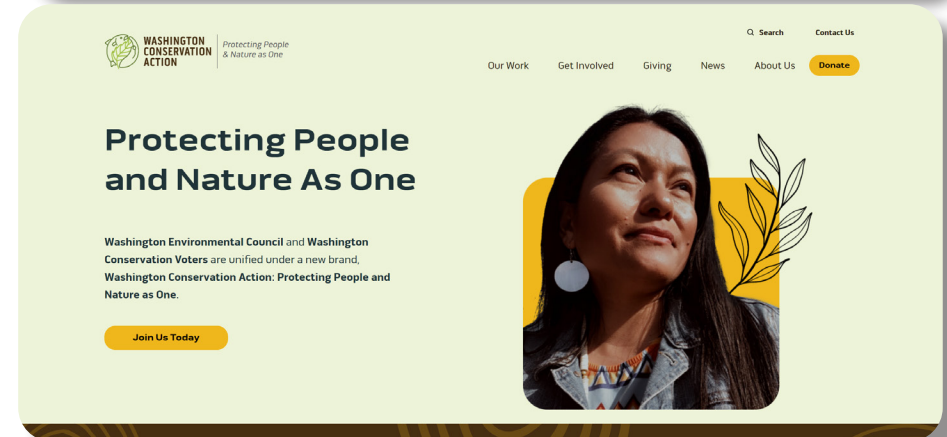
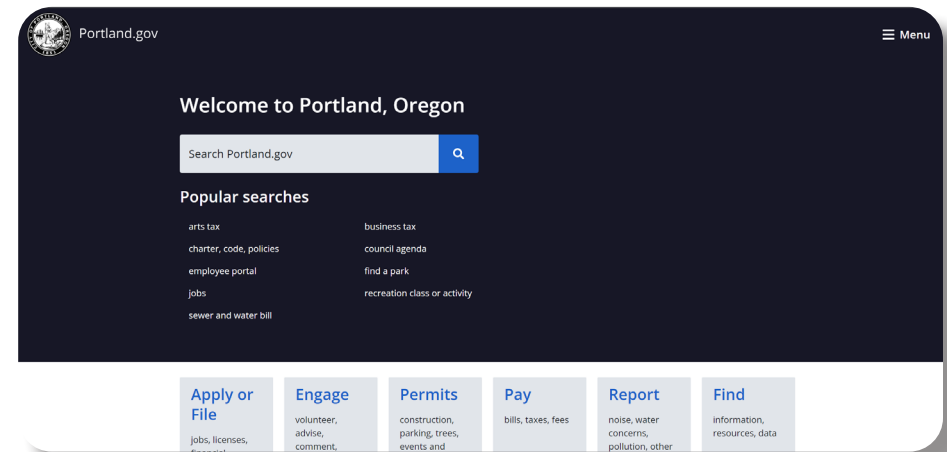




Inspiration

There are websites for organizations similar in scope to SKWC that have clean and distinct visual identities. Portland's government website has a useful "card" system for easily identifying popular pages. Washington Conservation Action's website uses eye-catching colors, imagery, and typefaces to stand out from competitors. ECOS relies on vivid photography to give visitors a sense of the organization the site represents.

I believe SKWC can benefit from systems like these and has all of the content necessary to do so already somewhere on their site, it just needs to be given space to shine.





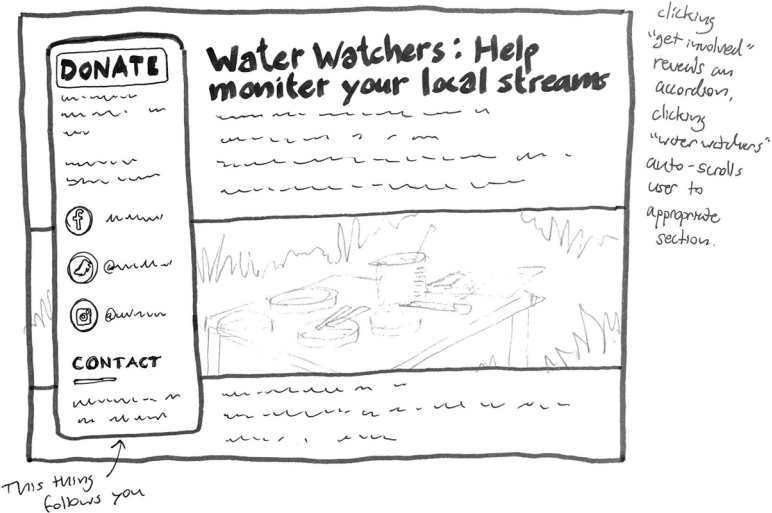
Sketches

Initial ideation developed several concepts to assist in streamlining user flows. Restructuring of the nav bar would end up making it to the final version. Site layout was modernized and decluttered.

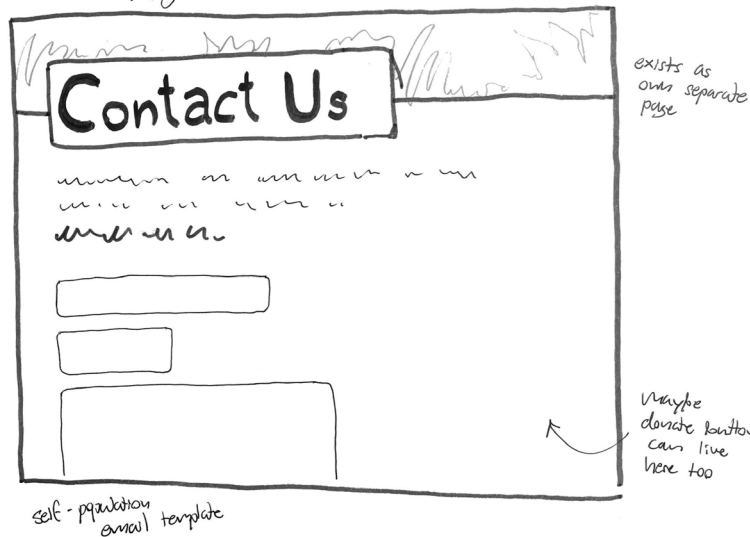
SKWC - KING WATERSHED COUNCIL - primary landing page



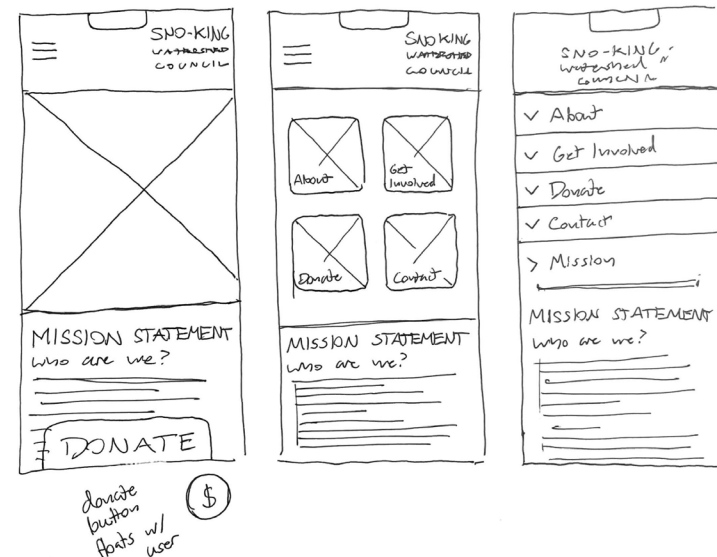
SKWC - Secondary page "water watchers" Home > get involved > water watchers



SKWC - tertiary page "contact us"



SKWC - Mobile Wireframing - "Homepage"



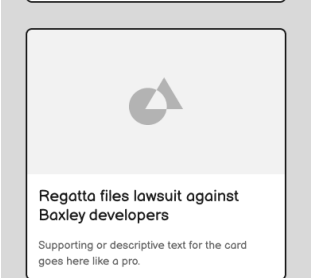
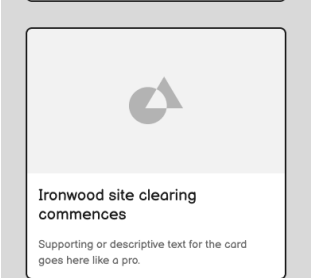
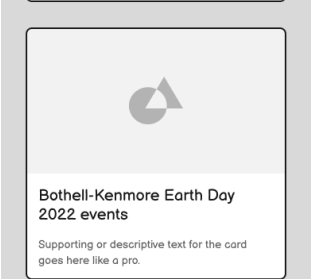
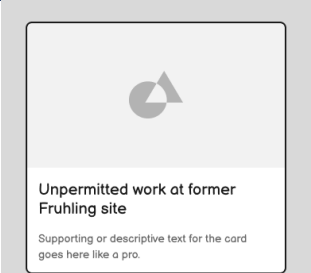
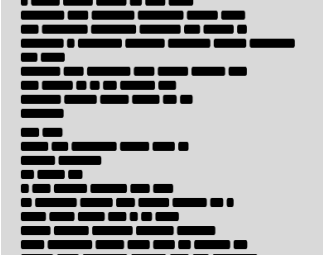
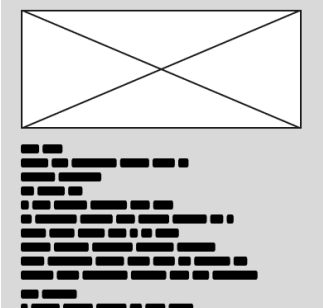
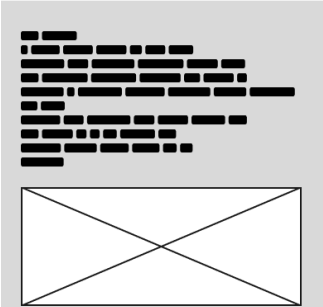
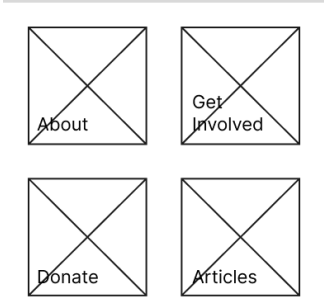


Wireframes

Insights

Translating the sketches to wireframes for the mobile version of the website yielded some useful insight into the positioning of various elements and gave a better impression of the potential user flows.

It was user feedback on this iteration that influenced the decision to change focus for the user flow goal. Instead of having a user navigate to a specific article, the primary, secondary, and tertiary pages would facilitate the discovery of a Water Watchers session for signup.

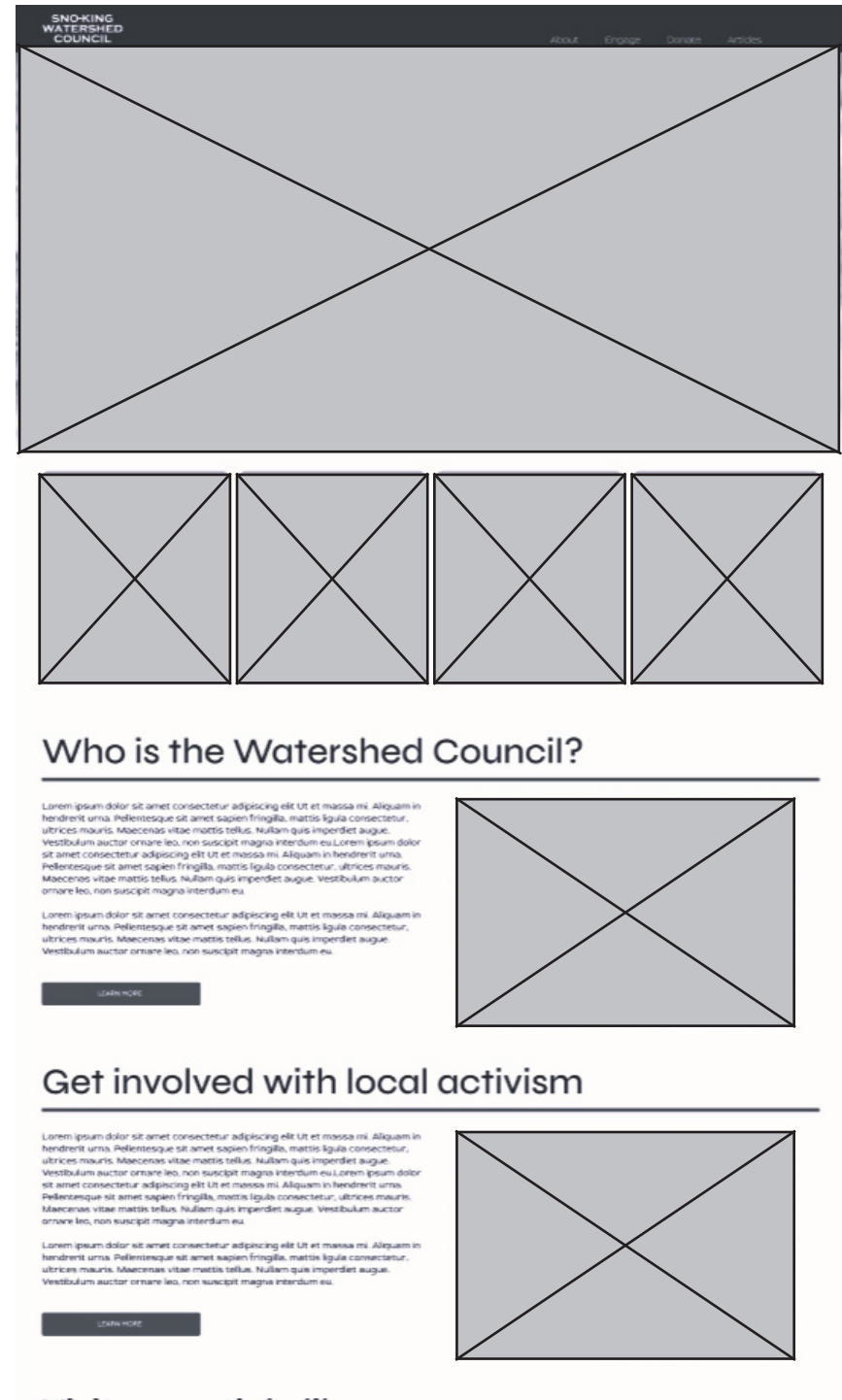




Lo-Fi

Insights

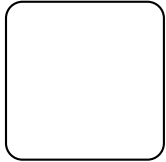
As the concept evolved, the home page underwent a series of redevelopments. Since it had originally been nothing but the blog posts, and my strategy involved removing those, several rounds of iteration each yielded different replacement layouts. Eventually, the “content list” style where all the relevant content was displayed sequentially on the home page was abandoned in favor of a more succinct presentation.





Rebrand

New fonts and a new color palette were carefully selected to relate to the organization's PNW identity. The logo has been slightly revised to better fit with the modernized visual language.



Header: Syne Protect Local Wildlife

Sub-header: Roboto Slab

Through advocacy and community outreach

Body: Open Sans

Every year, the streams, lakes, and reservoirs that provide Snohomish and King County with drinking water face a multitude of challenges. Pollution, legislation, and urban development all threaten the stability of the watersheds that nourish the Pacific Northwest.

SNO-KING
WATERSHED
COUNCIL





Usability Testing

USABILITY TESTING

1. Determine what the website is about.
2. Create 3 tasks for the user to perform:

Discover the org's mission statement

Sign up for a "WaterWatchers" session

Find the "Students Saving Salmon" article

4. Allow the user to explore the website
5. Rate your experience below (3 is highest):

	RATING	COMMENTS
Site load time is reasonable	3 2 1	
Font size/spacing is easy to read	3 2 1	
Logo is prominently placed	3 2 1	
Homepage is digestible in 5 seconds	3 2 1	
Clear path to important information	3 2 1	
Clear path to the "tasks"	3 2 1	
Main navigation is easily identifiable	3 2 1	
Navigation is clear and concise	3 2 1	HOW DO YOU GET TO NEXT PAGE?
Navigation is consistent	3 2 1	(home page > engage)
Major headings are clear & descriptive	3 2 1	
Styles + colors are consistent	3 2 1	
URLs and page titles are explanatory	3 2 1	
Overall website was easy to understand	3 2 1	
Website is error free on all viewports	3 2 1	

USABILITY TESTING

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5. Rate your experience below (3 is highest):

	RATING	COMMENTS
Site load time is reasonable	3 2 1	
Font size/spacing is easy to read	3 2 1	
Logo is prominently placed	3 2 1	could be smaller
Homepage is digestible in 5 seconds	3 2 1	
Clear path to important information	3 2 1	
Clear path to the "tasks"	3 2 1	doesn't make it clear where programs are
Main navigation is easily identifiable	3 2 1	order of pages doesn't make any sense
Navigation is clear and concise	3 2 1	hard to navigate away from home pg.
Navigation is consistent	3 2 1	
Major headings are clear & descriptive	3 2 1	
Styles + colors are consistent	3 2 1	
URLs and page titles are explanatory	3 2 1	
Overall website was easy to understand	3 2 1	
Website is error free on all viewports	3 2 1	



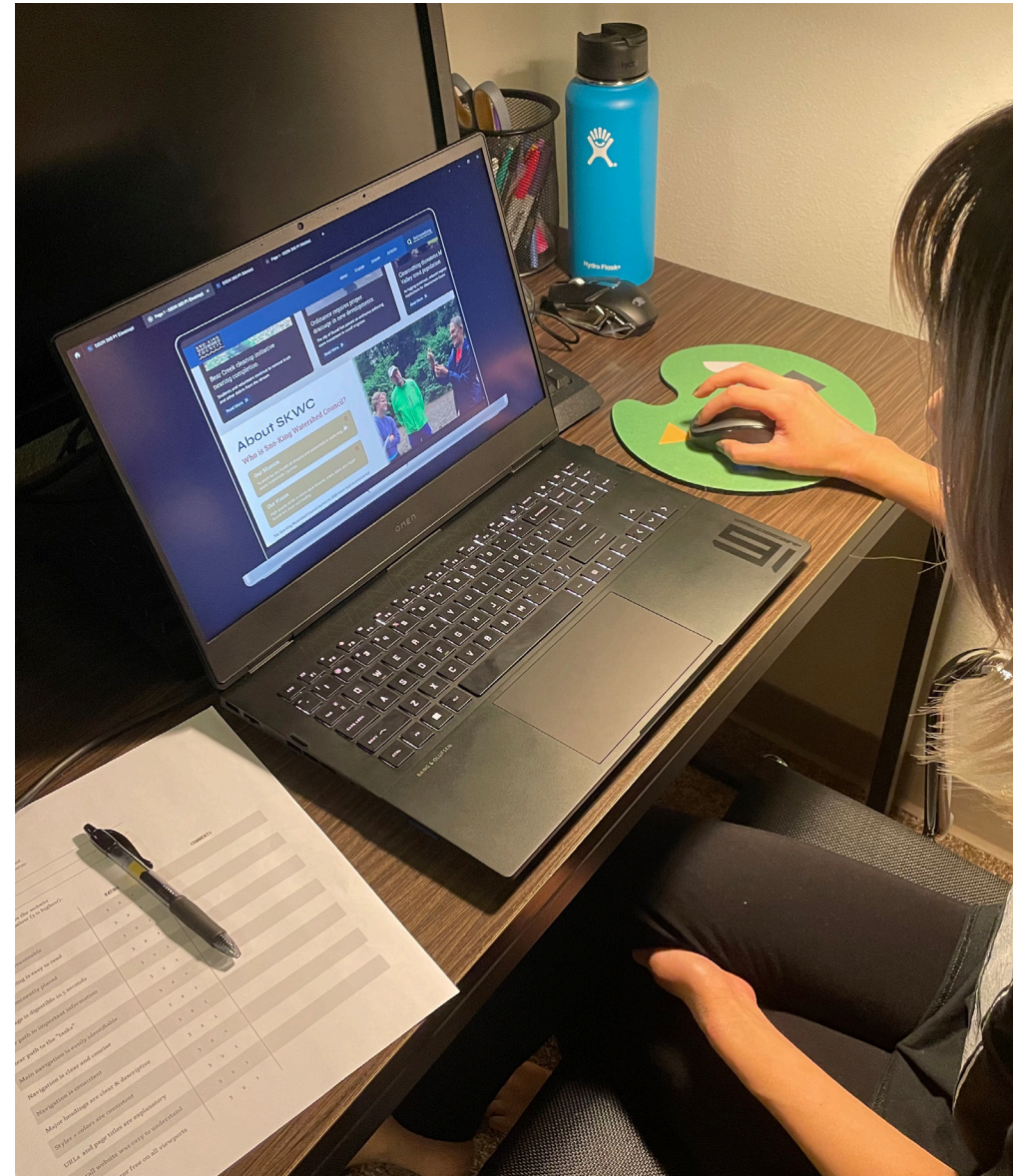
Usability Testing

Feedback

Testers were asked to browse the functional prototype and provide feedback on certain tasks.

The tasks were: Discover the organization's mission statement, sign up for a Water Watchers session, and find the Students Saving Salmon article.

Users had some difficulty with navigation away from the initial page, suggesting the need for further development on wayfinding. One user also suggested that some of the text was too large and distracting. It was reduced to a more tasteful point size for the final version. The user who tested the lo-fi prototype, before the home page was condensed, noted that the order of pages in the user flow for Water Watchers registration was confusing. This provided more justification for a restructuring of the "Engage" page.





Final Product



Final Product

Desktop

SNO-KING WATERSHED COUNCIL

AboutEngageDonateArticles

Find something

Protecting Our Waterways

Through education, monitoring, and community outreach

Every year, the streams, lakes, and reservoirs of Sno-King Watershed Council and Sno-King County face a multitude of challenges that threaten the health of our watersheds and the ecosystems and the people who depend on them. We are committed to protecting our waterways and the people who depend on them.

About

Engage

Donate

Articles

Recent Topics

The latest from around the watershed; news, politics, and activism

Bear Creek cleanup initiative nearing completion
Students and volunteers continue to remove trash and other debris from the stream.
Read More

Ordinance requires proper drainage in new developments
The city of Duvall has passed an ordinance enforcing more investment in runoff irrigation.
Read More

Clearcutting threatens M Valley trout population
As logging continues, reduced vegetation has implications for downstream fauna.
Read More

SNO-KING WATERSHED COUNCIL

AboutEngageDonateArticles

Find something

Get Involved

Programs and volunteer service

Give back to the planet! SKWC runs several programs for people to participate in. From environmental monitoring to political activism, there are many ways to make a difference and help the watershed thrive.

Swamp Creek Habitat Restoration Project

Water Watchers

Environmental Justice Fund

SKWC Membership

Report Construction Stormwater Violations

Individual Actions

Get in Contact

Reach out with questions or comments and we will respond as soon as possible!

Email: sno-kingwatershedcouncil@gmail.com
Call: 425-785-9731

This organization is currently registered with the secretary's office under the Fairtrade certification act. For information call 1-800-333-4443.

No goods or services are provided or services for your contributions. We are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. See 501(c)(3) for more.

Our Partners:

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Read More

Ordinance requires proper drainage in new developments
The city of Duvall has passed an ordinance enforcing more investment in runoff irrigation.
Read More

SNO-KING WATERSHED COUNCIL

AboutEngageDonateArticles

Find something

Water Watchers

Session calendar

Use the calendar to register for an upcoming class or session. Sessions occurring on a weekend or the first of every month are subject to more frequent rescheduling.

Monday February 6th, 2023

Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
30	31	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12

10:00am – 2:00pm: Bacteriological Monitoring

10:00am – 2:00pm: Water Chemistry Monitoring

3:00pm – 7:00pm: Stream Biomonitoring

Get in Contact

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About SKWC

Who is Sno-King Watershed Council?

Our Mission

Our Vision

The Sno-King Watershed Council started in 2008 when local environmental advocates decided to work together on stream and watershed protection in north King County and south Snohomish County.

Major program areas

Revitalization

An organization proud to share their story and invite others to join the cause. With a new visual identity and a drastically decluttered navigation system, SKWC is ready to lead others in making an impact.

Final Product

Mobile

SNO-KING WATERSHED COUNCIL



Home

Get Involved

Programs and volunteer service

Swamp Creek Habitat Restoration Project

Water Watchers

Environmental Justice Fund

SKWC Membership

Report Construction Stormwater Violations

Individual Actions

SNO-KING WATERSHED COUNCIL



Save Our Streams

Through education, monitoring, and community outreach

Every year, the streams, lakes, and reservoirs that provide Snohomish and King County with drinking water face a multitude of challenges. Help us protect these irreplaceable ecosystems and foster a culture of environmental stewardship for the future.

About

The story of SKWC, our mission, and what we do as an organization.

Engage

Learn how to get involved with our programs and make a difference!

Donate

Contribute to SKWC –

Articles

Blog posts about our

Use the calendar to register for an upcoming class or session. Sessions occurring on a weekend or the first of every month are subject to more frequent rescheduling.

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6	7	8	9	10	11	12

10am - 2pm:

Bacteriological Monitoring

10am - 2pm:

Water Chemistry Monitoring

10am - 2pm:

Stream Monitoring



Conclusion

Challenges

One of the greatest challenges when redesigning something with almost no brand or unified identity is starting from scratch. Having the freedom to remodel a website's look and operation can lead to unexpected obstacles. Thankfully, steady prototyping and usability testing can help smooth out the wrinkles as they appear.

Adapting the site for desktop and mobile use simultaneously also posed a heavy challenge at times, as each component had to be reworked to mirror its counterpart.

Reflection

In completing this project, I gained a number of valuable digital prototyping skills, especially in Figma. I also learned a great deal about how much branding, visual identity, and online presence can affect an organization's image, nonprofit or otherwise. Most importantly I was able to reaffirm how crucial the act of cataloging progress is in a long form project, and how each part of the process builds on the last to support the final vision.

Thank you
for your
time