

Backcountry Guide

VALIDATION & DESIGN GUIDE

By James Hooper



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Design Guide

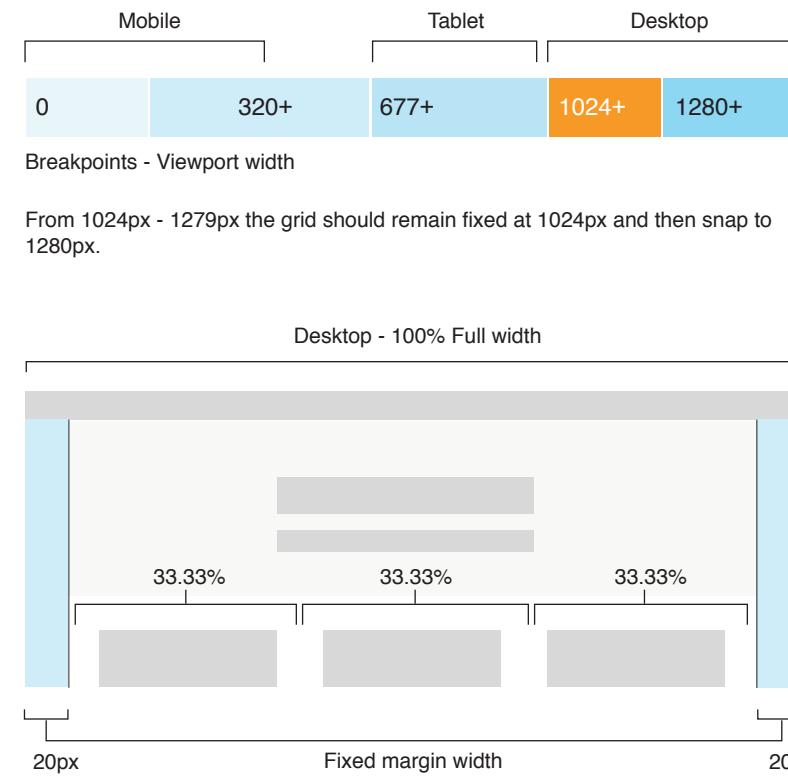
Color Swatches

The color swatches define specific sections and elements in the Backcountry Guide website. The Black, Gray, and Orange colors help enhance the photography.

	Navigation Links: 
	HEX: #fa9a26 rgb(250, 154, 38)
	Gear Background: 
	HEX: #cfcfcf rgb(207,207,207)
	Trail Header / Links: 
	HEX: #30b0be rgb(48,176,190)
	Text / Footer BG: 
	HEX: #000000 rgb(0,0,0)

Grid Size

This information helps define the various grid sizes of the viewport. This information explains the importance of the fixed margin and the flexible grid at various sizes.



Typography

Typography is strictly one font for the entire site. Here are the following rules that define the typeface, weights, and appropriate sizes.

Sans-Serif Hierarchy

AaBb / Helvetica

Hero Title - Helvetica Bold - 54px

AaBb / Helvetica

Header 1 - Helvetica Bold - 24px

AaBb / Helvetica

Trail Header - Helvetica Bold - 20px

AaBb / Helvetica

Body - Helvetica Regular - 14px

Jake the Trailblazer



"I need access to maps that I can navigate and track with my iPhone."

PERSONA

AGE	29
OCCUPATION	Ski Patrol Director
STATUS	Single
LOCATION	Salt Lake City, UT
EDUCATION	Bachelor Degree
TRAIT	Adventurer

Story

The outdoors have always been a big part of my life living in Utah. Every weekend you can find me hiking in the mountains of northern Utah. As a Ski Patrol Director, I keep busy in the winter months spending time on the mountain. In my spare time I love exploring the backcountry. Currently, I am determined to climb every trail in Utah.

GOALS

The primary reason for visiting the Backcountry Guide website and app is to gain access to maps that are well documented for each trailhead in the state of Utah. He is looking to increase his knowledge on all the trails that Utah has to offer. This site will provide the videos, images, and maps.

VISITING THE SITE

People like Jake visit this site for all the resources and information you could possibly want on the numerous trails in Utah. It's the ultimate guide.

REASONS FOR RETURNING

This site is a social community of other hikers posting their experiences. A great site to interact with other hikers.

INFLUENCES

- Maps
- Trails
- Friends
- Exercise
- Weather
- Mountains
- Skiing
- Photography
- Social Media

TOP BOOKMARKS

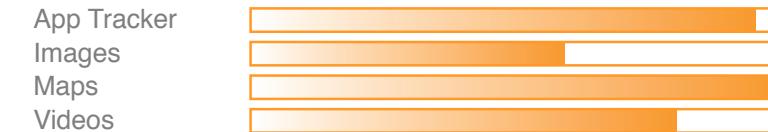
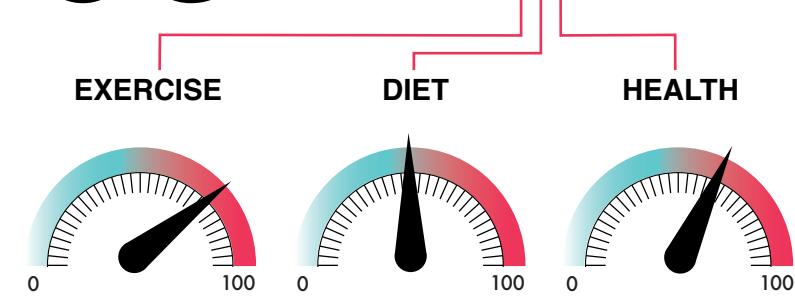
- Facebook
- Instagram
- NOAA
- Skiing
- Backpacker
- Google Maps

TECHNOLOGY

CONNECTION	DSL, Mobile
COMPUTER	iPhone 6+, Macbook
INTERNET USAGE	4+ hrs/day
APPS	Fitness, Maps, Social, Weather

Jake loves using APPS to track progress.

65% of his time online is spent on his mobile device using Apps that track his **activities**.



Jenny the Trailrunner



"Running is my passion. I love finding challenging trails to run and explore."

PERSONA

AGE	24
OCCUPATION	Registered Nurse
STATUS	Single
LOCATION	Park City, UT
EDUCATION	Bachelor Degree
TRAIT	Active Runner

Story

Working as a Nurse, I know how important it is to stay healthy. I am always on my feet so I have to stay very active. One of the best ways for me to relieve stress and stay in shape is running. My favorite exercise is trail running. This gets me out in the fresh mountain air and allows me to enjoy the outdoors as well.

GOALS

The primary reason for visiting the Backcountry Guide website and app is to view the beautiful images of particular trailheads to run in Utah. She is also looking to find new scenic routes to run that is near her home. This site will provide her with all the destinations, images, and maps.

VISITING THE SITE

People like Jenny visit this site for all the resources and information you could possibly want on the numerous trails in Utah. It's the ultimate guide.

REASONS FOR RETURNING

This site is a social community of other hikers posting their experiences. A great site to interact with other hikers.

INFLUENCES

- Work
- Boyfriend
- Friends
- Exercise
- Yoga
- Outdoors
- Trailrunning
- Photography
- Social Media

TOP BOOKMARKS

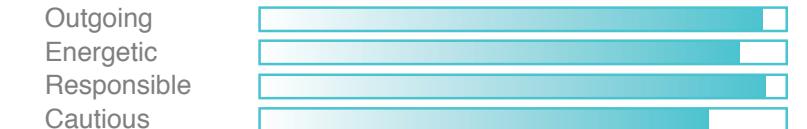
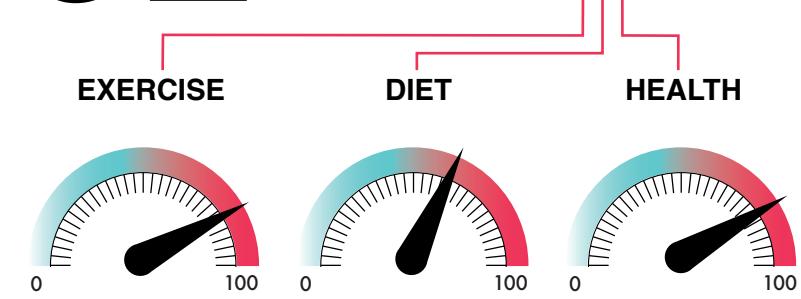
- Facebook
- Instagram
- Shape
- Nordstrom
- Yahoo
- Runners World

TECHNOLOGY

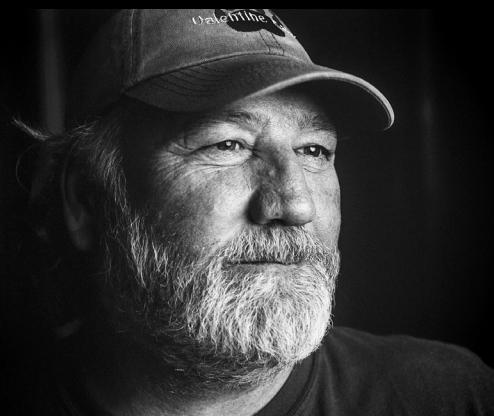
CONNECTION	DSL, Mobile
COMPUTER	Samsung Galaxy, Microsoft Surface
INTERNET USAGE	5+ hrs/day
APPS	Fitness, Social, Games

Jenny loves to track her workouts.

52% of her time online is spent on her mobile device using Apps that track her **activities**.



Joe the Scoutleader



"I love exploring the outdoors and finding new trails to explore. Maps are essential."

PERSONA

AGE	58
OCCUPATION	Boyscout Leader
STATUS	Married
LOCATION	St George, UT
EDUCATION	Bachelor Degree
TRAIT	Outdoorsman

Story

The outdoors have been a huge part of my life ever since I was a boy. I fell in love with backpacking since I was a young boy in the boy scouts. Now I am a Boyscout leader. I am always searching for the best places to explore for my troops. I would love to find a website that has a thorough knowledge of all the trails.

GOALS

The primary reason for visiting the Backcountry Guide website and app is to gain access to maps that are well documented for each trailhead in the state of Utah. He is looking for new campsites for his boy scout troop. This site will offer him a thorough knowledge of each trail.

VISITING THE SITE

People like Jake visit this site for all the resources and information you could possibly want on the many trails in Utah. It's the ultimate guide.

REASONS FOR RETURNING

This site is a social community of other hikers posting their experiences. A great site to interact with other hikers.

INFLUENCES

- Maps
- Trails
- Friends
- Outdoors
- Weather
- Family
- Camping

TOP BOOKMARKS

- Facebook
- MSN
- Weather
- Gmail
- Backpacker
- Google Maps

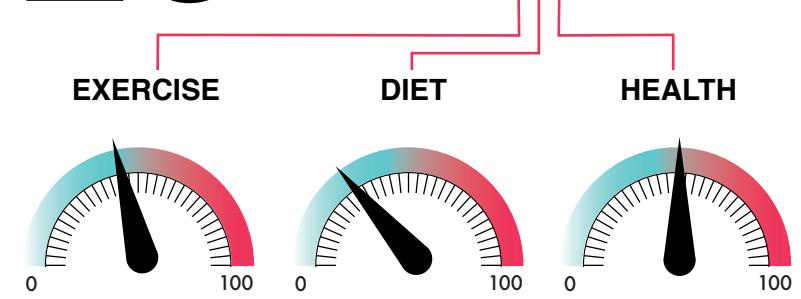
TECHNOLOGY

CONNECTION	DSL, Mobile
COMPUTER	Android, Dell Desktop
INTERNET USAGE	2+ hrs/day
APPS	Maps, Weather, Social, News

Joe loves using Maps to find new trails.

25%

of his time online is spent on his mobile device using Apps that track his **activities**.



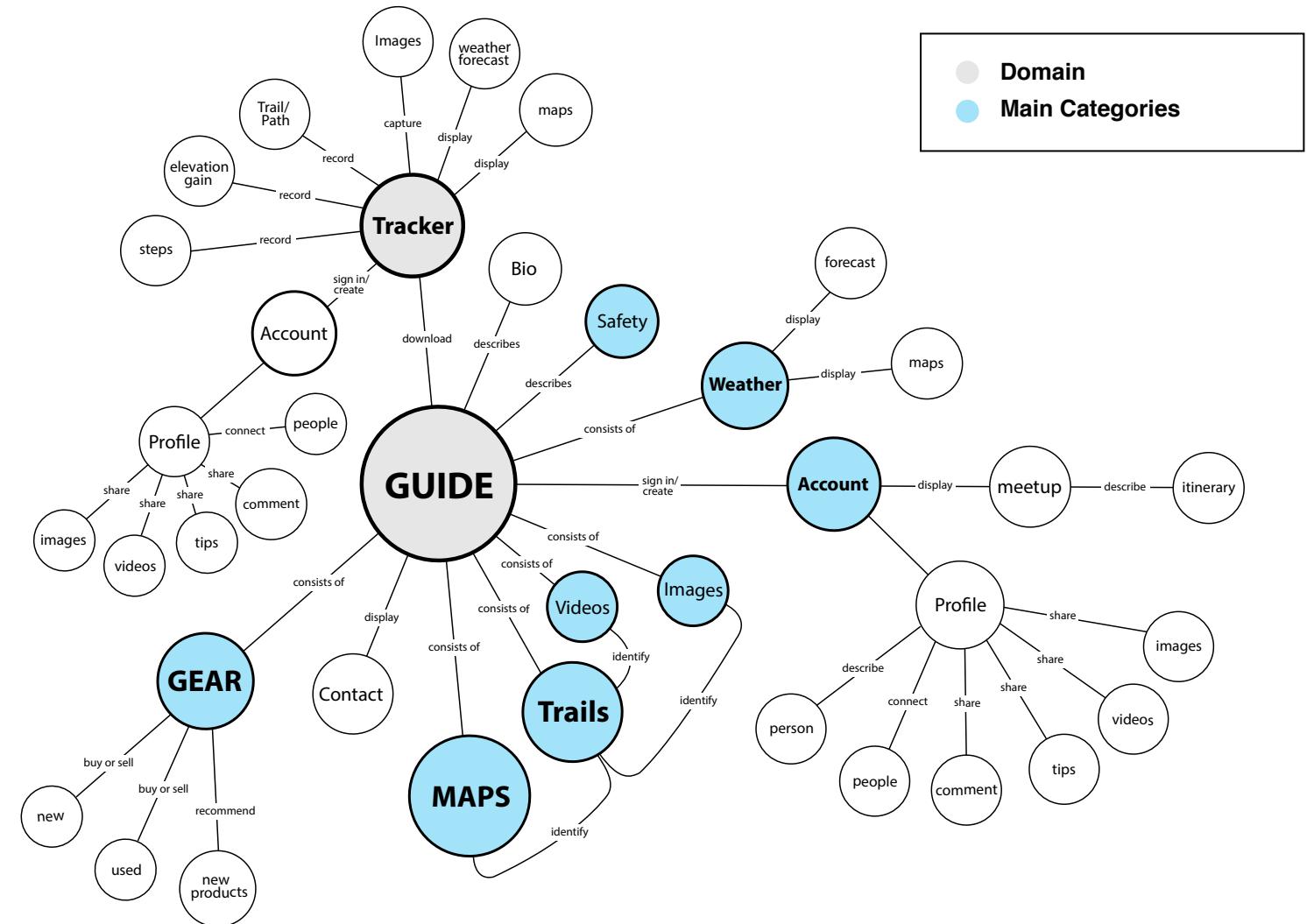
Concept Model

Concept Model

The Concept Model is all about finding new ideas and concepts that can help improve your project as you move forward in the design process.

This Domain is all about the backcountry and connecting these ideas to create a more clear picture of the Backcountry Guide. The following diagram is displaying relevant ideas, such as maps, trails, videos, images, and more.

After refining this diagram thoroughly, it is clear to see that there are a few concepts that will really help improve and provide value to the new Backcountry Guide website.



Post-It Notes

Working with Post-It Notes

One of the best ways to gain insight in your new project is by throwing ideas up on the wall using Post-It notes. Using Post-It notes is a great way to explore new ideas quickly. It helps you figure out the flow of your content and gives you a direction to take.

This process is much like mapping out your website. How do you envision your website? This is the question I often asked, as I stood idle in front of my wall of wonder. It is a great way to categorize your ideas and make sense of the entire scope of your project.

There is so much freedom using Post-It notes. Just stand back and take your time analyzing your ideas and you will find the right approach for your project. It took me some time to move the categories around and see if there was a better way of arranging my

content. In the end, I feel like I have a good idea on how to categorize all the information I need to include in my new website/app. Now that I have this planned out, I can illustrate a detailed version of this on the following page.



Map Tracker App



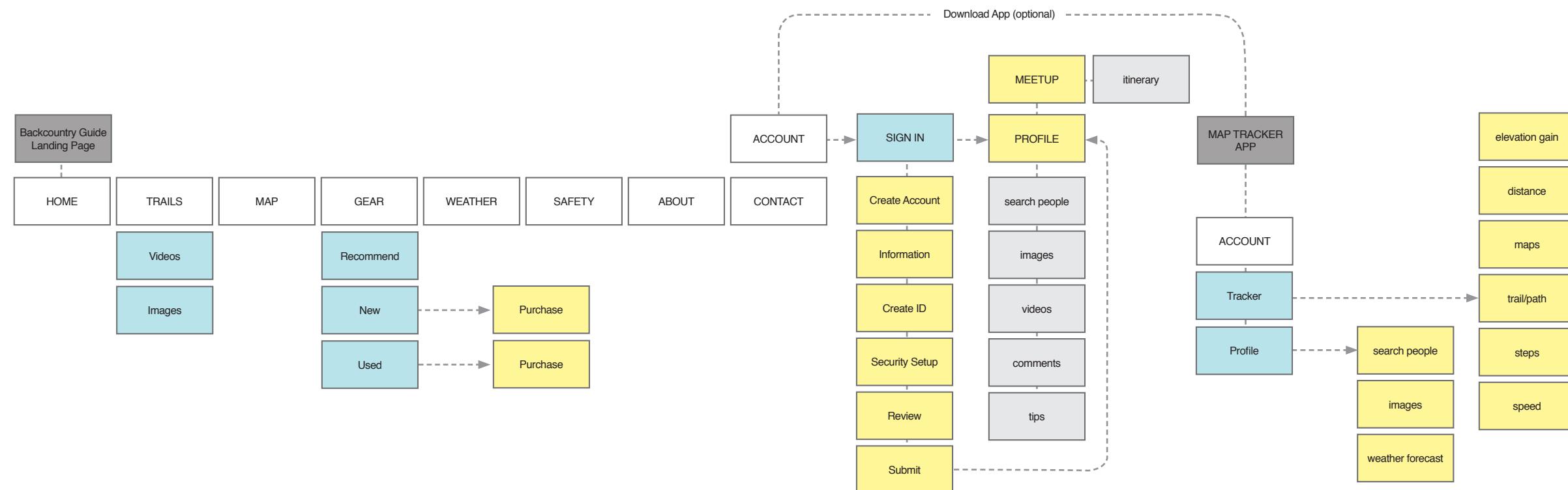
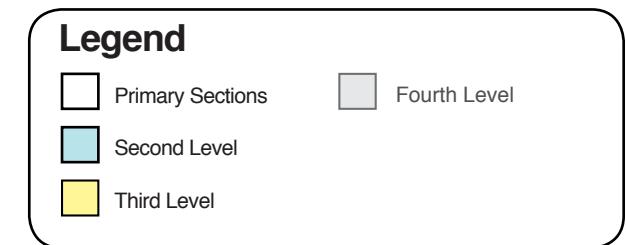
Backcountry Guide Website

Site Map

Backcountry Guide Site Map

The site map exhibits how the navigation and all the pages of the entire site should be arranged. All the steps that led to this part of the design process made it easy for me to come to such a successful outcome. This map establishes the direction and flow.

Information Architecture is about helping people understand where they are and how to find what it is they are looking for. I carefully considered how to organize all the information in a way that will make it easy for anyone to navigate.



Sketch Prototype 1.0

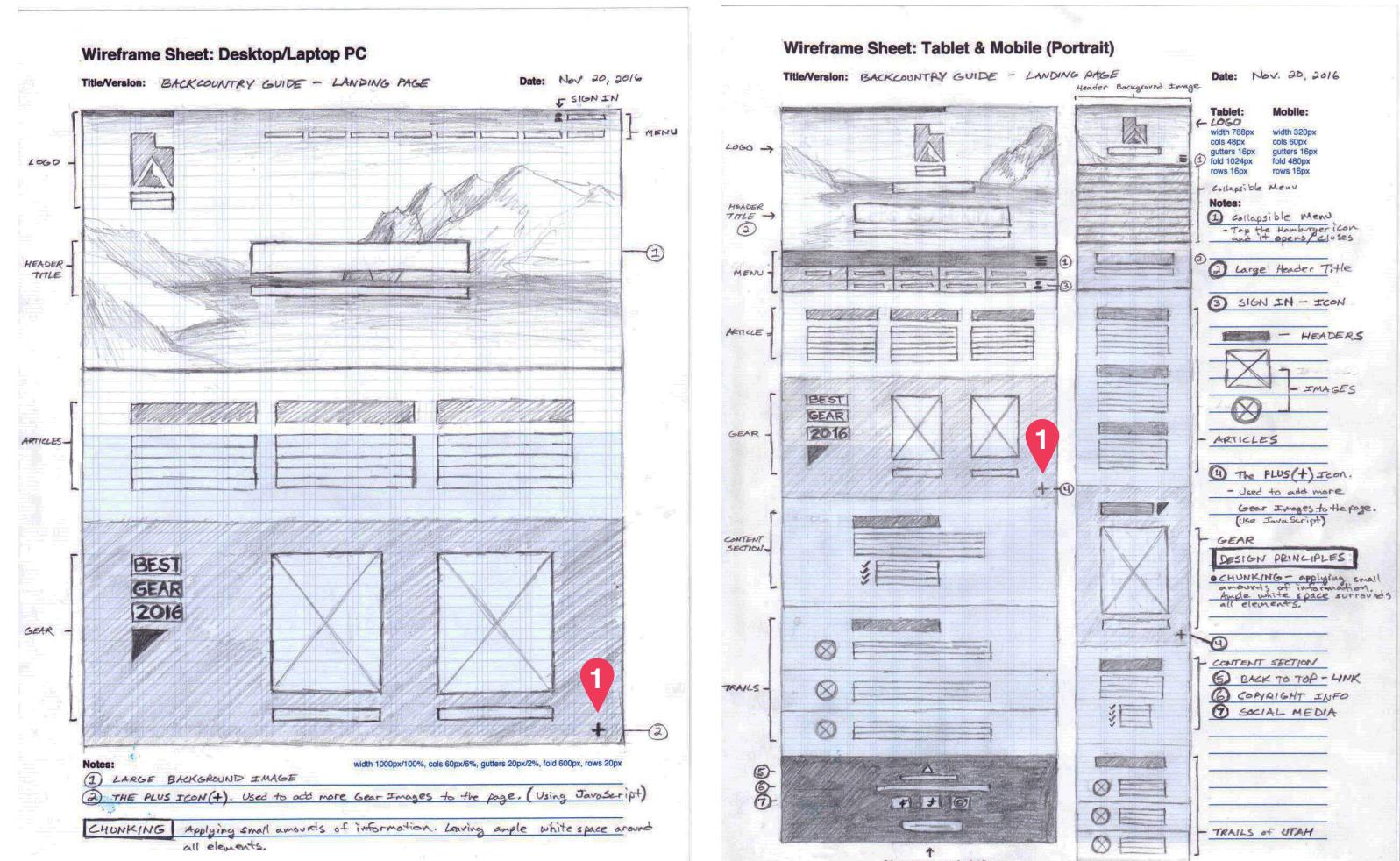
The Landing Page

The sketching process is about the visual hierarchy and how all your content should be positioned. You really have to understand and analyze each page and ask yourself what each page consists of to better understand your layout.

Sketching the prototype is not all about your drawing skills. This process is more about discovering where and how each visual component should be arranged and positioned.

Your web page may contain a good amount of content. As I was sketching out my landing page, I discovered that I could use a *plus* icon in the far right bottom corner of a section to expand/collapse the content.

- 1 See the illustration and how I positioned the *plus* icon.



Sketch Prototype 2.0

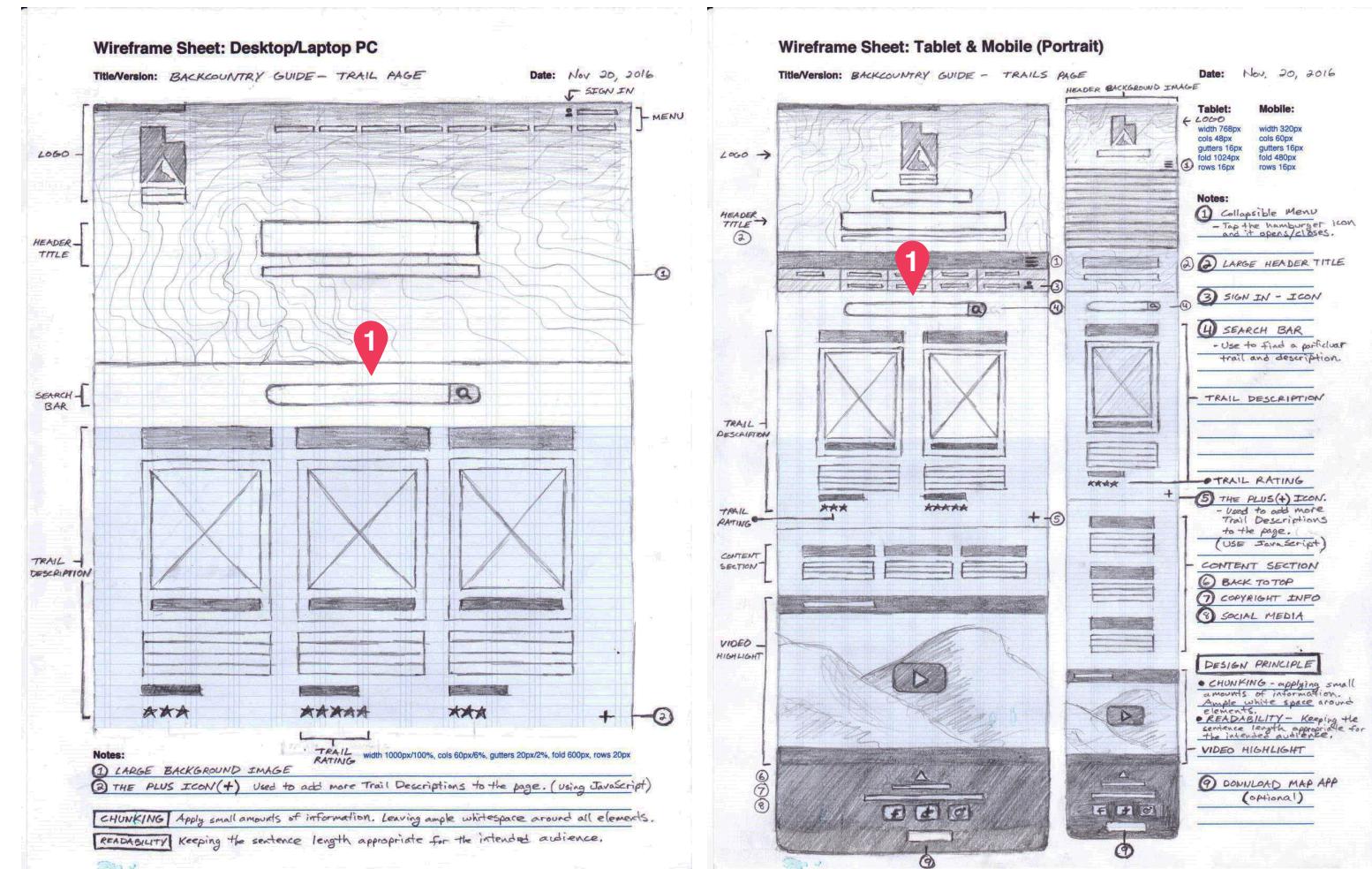
The Trail Page

Creating the next web page of my sketch work becomes easier, now that I have the landing page established. It is important to mimic the look and feel of the landing page. Your website should always have a consistent feel.

The Trail page is one of the most important components of my website. There will be several hiking trails I will include in my website.

- 1 I realized that I should add a *search bar* for the users to find the many trails to explore. This will allow a quicker way of finding specific trailheads.

Creating more value for my audience is the number one goal. I will be posting many well produced videos of trailheads, images, statistics, and information that hikers may need to be aware of for each trail.



Sketching the Concept

What the Sketch Reveals

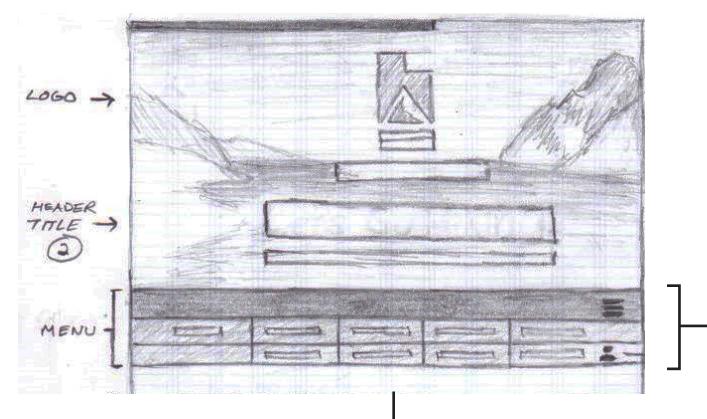
What is amazing about the sketching process, is that it has nothing to do with your drawing abilities. It has everything to do with creating a nicely composed visual hierarchy of content. There are a couple of significant components that I discovered while sketching up ideas for my new website.

I found that it might be best to add a vertical navigation for the mobile phone and tablet. However, through sketching my navigation for the tablet, I realized I need to create the navigation a little differently, due to all the categories in the navigation. With the tablet navigation, I decided to create a collapsible navigation that drops vertically with only 2 rows. This will really help create more room on the tablet.

2-Row, Horizontal Collapsible Navigation

As I began sketching out my landing page, I discovered that I could use a *plus* icon in the far right bottom corner of a section to expand/collapse the content. This could be a nice way to conserve space but allow for more expansion for each particular section such as the *Gear* section and the *Trail Description* section of the Trails page.

These are items I would not even think of if it wasn't for sketching out the RWD sketches.



RWD Sketching Phase

I strongly agree that you must begin the sketching phase with RWD at the forefront. By sketching the different platforms it reveals any challenges and solutions you may need to implement and work with.

The one challenge I struggled with was the navigation. I have 9 categories in my navigation and that seems to take up too much space on the tablet, if it is positioned vertically.

I decided to sketch a collapsible 2-row, horizontal navigation, splitting the navigation in 2. This sketch reveals that it should work out nicely both expanding and collapsing, while saving space on the page.

Wireframes 1.0

Wireframes Define the Design

Wireframes describe the content of the web page and all the relationships among each other. This is the stage where your website begins to take shape.

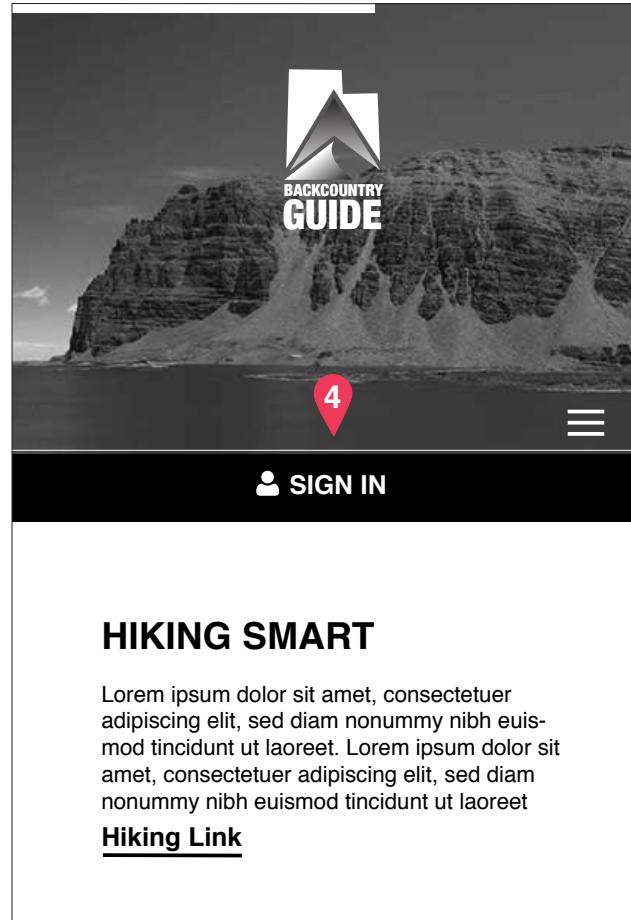
Notice how all three screen templates have a large image for the header. What is important to notice here, is how the navigation adjusts a little bit differently for each screen template.

- 1 The mobile navigation scrolls vertically when clicking the hamburger icon. This falls below the header image.
- 2 The tablet navigation scrolls vertically with only 3 rows, and 4 columns. This also falls below the header image.
- 3 The desktop navigation is arranged on top of the screen to conform to common web standards and make more space available for the header image.

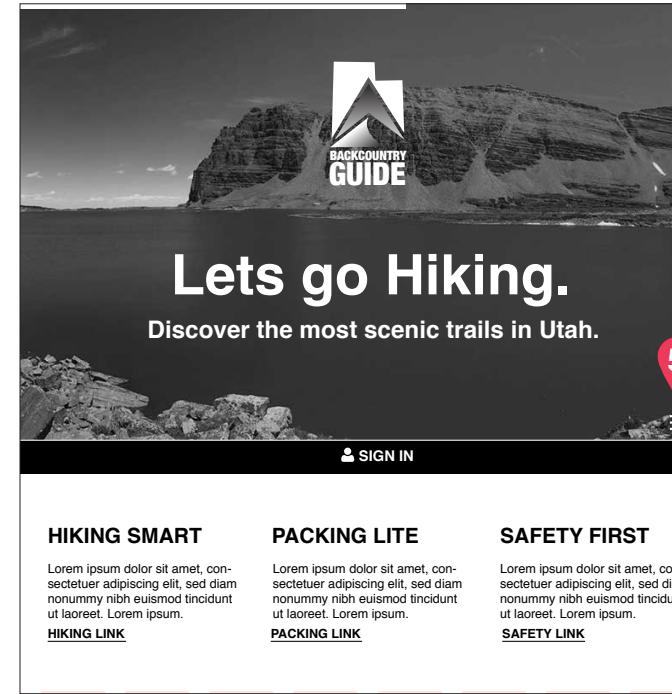
The image displays three wireframe prototypes for a Backcountry Guide website, each with a red numbered callout indicating a specific design feature:

- Desktop:** Shows a header with a logo and navigation links (HOME, TRAILS, MAP, GEAR, WEATHER, SAFETY, ABOUT, CONTACT). Below the header is a large landscape image of a mountain lake. The main content area features a title "Lets go Hiking." and subtitle "Discover the most scenic trails in Utah." followed by three columns of content: "HIKING SMART" (with text placeholder), "PACKING LITE" (with text placeholder), and "SAFETY FIRST" (with text placeholder). At the bottom are two product cards: "Osprey Backpack" and "Mammut Jacket".
- Tablet:** Shows a header with a logo and navigation links (HOME, TRAILS, MAP, GEAR, WEATHER, SAFETY, ABOUT, CONTACT). Below the header is a large landscape image of a mountain lake. The main content area features a title "Lets go Hiking." and subtitle "Discover the most scenic trails in Utah." followed by three columns of content: "HIKING SMART" (with text placeholder), "PACKING LITE" (with text placeholder), and "SAFETY FIRST" (with text placeholder). At the bottom are two product cards: "Osprey Backpack" and "Mammut Jacket".
- Mobile:** Shows a header with a logo and a "SIGN IN" button. Below the header is a large landscape image of a mountain lake. The main content area features a title "Lets go Hiking." and subtitle "Discover the most scenic trails in Utah." followed by three columns of content: "HIKING SMART" (with text placeholder), "PACKING LITE" (with text placeholder), and "SAFETY FIRST" (with text placeholder). At the bottom are two product cards: "Osprey Backpack" and "Mammut Jacket".

Wireframes 1.1



Mobile Navigation



Tablet Navigation

This project has come a long ways from the beginning, and my ideas have grown stronger. The navigation has really presented some design challenges along the way with my design concept.

4 It is important to focus on the navigation. Notice how I kept the *Sign In* link in the navigation. This is done because it is important for the audience to find their Account Login link.

5 The *hamburger* icon helps keep the design clean and makes the header image look really nice and uncluttered in both the tablet and mobile template screen.

My goal is to maintain order and hierarchy. I always make sure that all my content makes sense and each element is well balanced. Remember the content must have plenty of room to breathe on the page.

Surface Comps - Desktop

Landing Page - 1024 px width

414 px height

1 SIGN IN icon and link on the top.

2 Plus icon expands and collapses the Gear section. To see more gear for sale, tap the Plus icon.

3 Hiking icon represents the Trail section.

4 Blue background header represents all Trail information throughout the entire website.

5 Play Video icon represents all videos of trails documented.

6 Back to Top / Up Arrow is a link that helps the user navigate back to the top with ease.

7 Large Header font size is 54px.

Universal Principle of Design:

Depth of Processing - Trail section will contain videos, images, articles, maps, and questions to help retain knowledge about each trailhead.

Be Prepared

You would be surprised how many times people have been caught in a bad situation up in the mountains. Most of the time, it could have been prevented. It is easy to lose track of time when you are hiking all day long. If you don't know how long it takes to hike the trail, you may get stuck up on the mountain. The dark nights get quite cold, which is often difficult to navigate without the proper gear and clothing. Here is a list of items you should heed:

- ✓ Tell a family member where you are going.
- ✓ Know the miles and time it will take to hike.
- ✓ Always bring a protective rain jacket.
- ✓ Bring plenty of water/food.

Trails in Utah

Mt Olympus

Exploring the trailhead of Mt Olympus is a steep climb to say the least. You will have an amazing view of Salt Lake City the entire hike, as it stands high above the city. It is often a tough hike on hot days, so you may want to start as early as possible to prevent heat exhaustion. You will be climbing about 4074 feet high to the top of this peak. This is well worth the hike.

Hiking Difficulty: ★★★★☆

Lone Peak

This beautiful mountain is located high above Draper, Utah. This trailhead is 9 miles round trip. You climb over 5500ft in elevation gain. Therefore it is important to train and get in shape for this hike. My favorite part of this trip is the beautiful camp sites it has to offer. The scenery up this mountain is incredible and perfect for photographers of all skills.

Hiking Difficulty: ★★★★★

Lake Blanche

Lake Blanche is the perfect hike that sits high above the city of Salt Lake City, Utah. It is a short drive up Big Cottonwood canyon. This lake sits in the center of Twin Peaks Wilderness Area. The trail is well maintained, and the hike is approximately 6 miles round trip. You gain 2668 feet of elevation, so it doesn't seem like a tough climb but the elevations gets to some people.

Hiking Difficulty: ★★★★☆

Back to Top

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[Download on iTunes](#)

- 1** SIGN IN icon and link on the top.
- 2** Plus icon expands and collapses the Gear section. To see more gear for sale, tap the Plus icon.
- 3** Hiking icon represents the Trail section.
- 4** Blue background header represents all Trail information throughout the entire website.
- 5** Play Video icon represents all videos of trails documented.
- 6** Back to Top / Up Arrow is a link that helps the user navigate back to the top with ease.
- 7** Large Header font size is 54px.

Color Categories

- █ Represents the links: Logo, Sign In, hover state.
- This color represents all the Trail information
- Gray represents all the gear products for sale.

Desktop: 1024 px width

Font: Helvetica

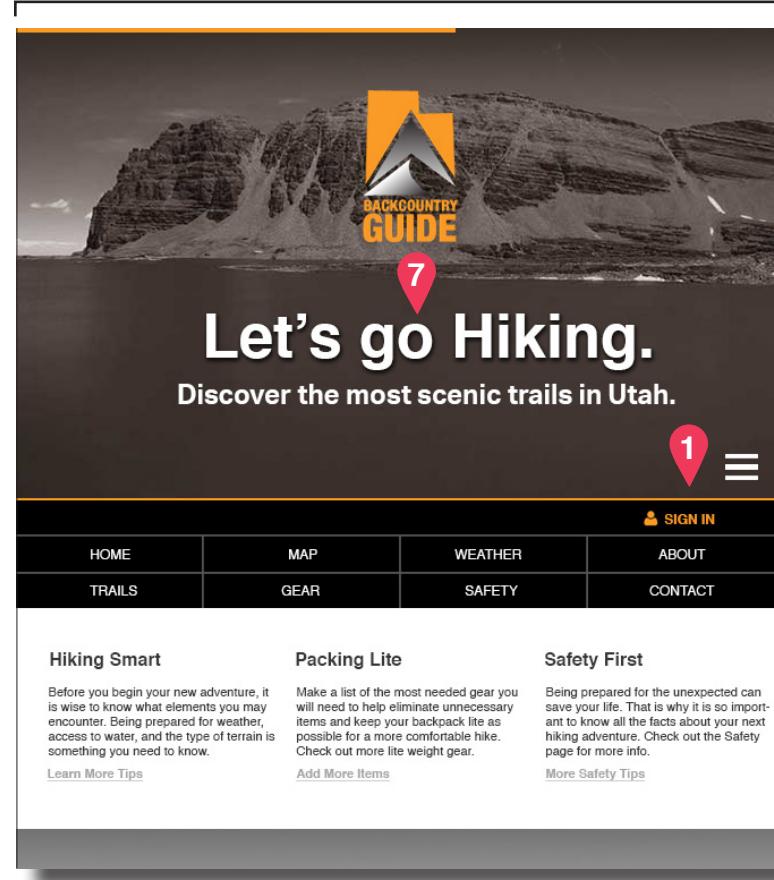
Body Font Size: 14px

Header 1 Font Size: 24px

Surface Comps - Tablet

Header Image - 677 px width

414 px height



Hamburger icon
Collapsible Navigation



- 1 Sign In icon and link on the top.
- 2 Plus icon expands and collapses the Gear section. To see more gear for sale tap the Plus icon.
- 3 Hiking icon represents the Trail section.
- 4 Blue background header represents all Trail information throughout the entire website.
- 5 Play Video icon represents all videos of trails documented.
- 6 Back to Top / Up Arrow is a link that helps the user navigate back to the top with ease.
- 7 Large Header font size is 54px.

Color Categories

- █ Represents the links: Logo, Sign In, hover state.
- █ This color represents all the Trail information
- █ Gray represents all the gear products for sale.

Tablet: 677 px width

Font: Helvetica

Body Font Size: 11px

Header 1 Font Size: 16px

Surface Comps - Mobile

1 SIGN IN icon and link on the bottom.

7 Large Header in mobile template, however the h1 and paragraph will be in the HTML, hidden for SEO purposes.

Single Column - 320 px width

2 Plus icon expands and collapses the Gear section. To see more gear for sale tap the Plus icon.

3 Plus icon expands and collapses the Trail section. To see more trails and information tap the Plus icon.

4 Trail information becomes center aligned in the mobile version.

5 Play Video icon represents all videos of trails documented.

6 Back to Top / Up Arrow is a link that helps the user navigate back to the top with ease.

7 No Large Header in mobile template, however the h1 and paragraph will be in the HTML, hidden for SEO purposes.

1 Sign In icon and link on the bottom.

2 Plus icon expands and collapses the Gear section. To see more gear for sale tap the Plus icon.

3 Plus icon expands and collapses the Trail section. To see more trails and information tap the Plus icon.

4 Trail information becomes center aligned in the mobile version.

5 Play Video icon represents all videos of trails documented.

6 Back to Top / Up Arrow is a link that helps the user navigate back to the top with ease.

7 No Large Header in mobile template, however the h1 and paragraph will be in the HTML, hidden for SEO purposes.

Download
Map Tracker
App.

Mobile: 320 px width
Font: Helvetica
Body Font Size: 14px
Header 1 Font Size: 18px

The Final Design

Designing with Surface Comps

Designing with surface comps allow you the flexibility and freedom to create your layout with all the specifications you built upon during the wireframe process. This is an integral part of any design process, because it reveals any design flaws and strengths you may come across before building your actual website.

After completing my surface comps, I discovered that my color scheme does work really well with the gradient mesh that I incorporated into the large header background image. I decided to implement a nice use of gradients in the gear section as well to help tie in the overall design of the layout.

Overall I feel that I successfully built and designed a look that portrays the sole purpose of my website. I included rich content such as beautiful images, helpful content, to help draw interest for anyone interested in exploring the great outdoors with me.



Hiking Smart

Before you begin your new adventure, it is wise to know what elements you may encounter. Being prepared for weather, access to water, and the terrain is something you need to know.

[Learn More Tips](#)

Packing Lite

Make a list of the gear you will need to help eliminate unnecessary items and keep your backpack lite as possible for a more comfortable hike. Check out more lite weight gear.

[Add More Items](#)

Safety First

Being prepared for the unexpected can save your life. That is why it is so important to know all the facts about your next hiking adventure. Check out the Safety page for more info.

[More Safety Tips](#)

Prototyping

Notice the orange line which highlights the current page. This helps clarify what page the user is on.

Search bar is the best way to find specific trails quickly.

Back to Top link allows for easy access back to the top of the page.

Prototyping Clarifies the Experience

Building a prototype is going to help create the best experience for your audience. This is where you begin testing the navigation and all the links that reside in your website. Once you connect all these links and find your navigation has a smooth transition from page to page, you can proceed with the development of your new website.

Make sure that you have a seamless navigation throughout your site, before you send the prototype off to the development team. Users will have a much better time engaging with your content if your navigation is easy to use.

Finding information quickly is the best way to create a good user experience for anyone. Your audience will appreciate it. Now that we have the prototype built properly, it's time to develop this website and watch our audience grow into loyal consumers.



Summary

Creating a Validation and Design Guide is the best way to implement the rules and specifications that will uphold and maintain the Backcountry Guide website for many months to come. It's important to be open for additional changes as this website will continually grow with content.

The goal is to offer real value and substance for people who are interested in exploring Utah's trails. In addition, people will be able to connect with other hikers when they create an account. Hopefully this website will encourage people to go outdoors and explore the most scenic trails.