Schenck Global LLC
AVTA Website – Review & Recommendations

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Introduction

I've put together some observations and recommendations that I think would help make the site more useful, informative, and inviting to visitors.

These are intended as starting points for discussion. Some ideas may be relatively simple changes, while others may require more consideration about how AVTA wants to manage and maintain the website.

Website Goals

I think the website serves two main purposes.

The first is helping people discover and explore the trails in the area. Visitors may be coming from nearby communities or traveling from out of town. They're looking for information to help them decide which trails to visit and plan their trip.

The second purpose is encouraging people to get involved with and support the trails. The website should help visitors understand what AVTA does and how they can help through membership, donations, volunteering, or simply spreading the word.

I'd like to see the website do a better job of guiding people in both directions: helping visitors enjoy the trails and showing them how they can support them.

Overall Opportunities

Content and Photo Refresh

One of the biggest opportunities is refreshing the existing content. Much of the information on the website originally came from brochures when the website was originally created. While some information has been updated over time, other sections could benefit from a closer look.

The same applies to the photos. Many of the current photos are older, and newer digital photography provides an opportunity to show the trails in a much more appealing way. This doesn't mean every older photo needs to go. Some, such as the trail construction and maintenance photos, have historical value and should be retained.

Maps and brochures should also be reviewed to make sure the information is still accurate and current.

Overall, the goal is to better present the trail experience and give visitors a reason to explore what the area has to offer.

Better Guidance for Visitors

The current website contains a lot of information about the trails and AVTA. What I think it lacks is a clear starting point for someone who is unfamiliar with the area.

A new page, perhaps called **Plan Your Visit**, could help fill that gap. This would be a visitor-focused page that brings together information such as:

- An overview of the trails in the area
- Parking areas and directions
- Restrooms and other facilities
- Boat launches and camping locations, where applicable
- Points of interest along the trails
- Linking to more detailed information

The idea is to give visitors a useful overview and help them start planning their trip without having to search through several different pages.

Page-by-Page Recommendations

Homepage

I'd keep the image slider at the top of the page, but make better use of the space around it by adding some prominent links to information visitors are likely looking for.

Some possibilities include:

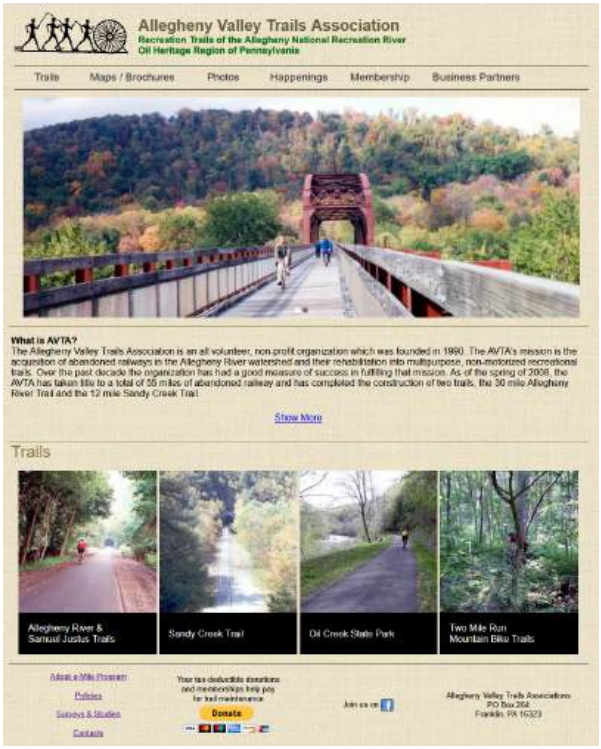
- Plan Your Visit
- Trail Maps
- Trail Notices
- Support Our Trails

I would also give the main AVTA trails more prominence on the homepage. These are the trails the AVTA is directly associated with, so they should be a primary focus.

Oil Creek State Park and Two Mile Run County Park offer other recreational opportunities in the area, but AVTA doesn't maintain those trails. I'd consider moving them into their own section, such as **Other Area Trails** or **Other Area Attractions**, rather than giving them the same prominence as the trails you maintain.

Below is just a conceptual idea of what could be done.

Existing Homepage



Illustrative Concept



Individual Trail Pages

I'd like to see the trail pages provide a better overview at the top, followed by more detailed information further down the page.

The goal is to help visitors quickly understand what each trail offers and decide whether it's the right trail for their visit. Important information such as distance, surface, access, and highlights should be easy to find.

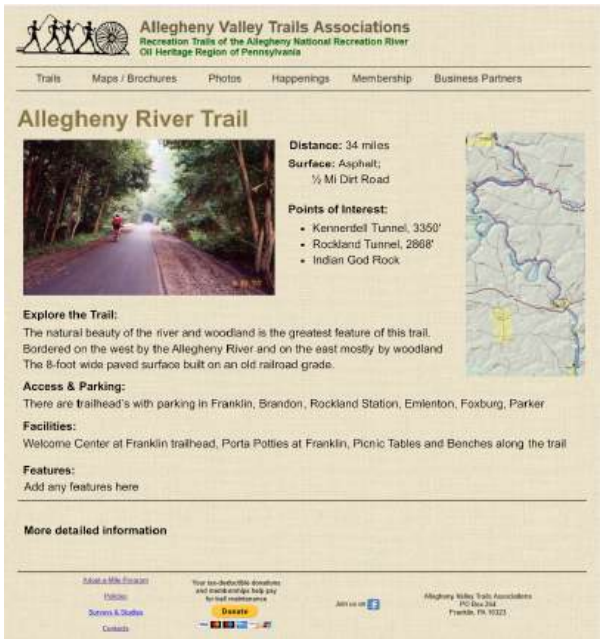
Below that overview, the page could provide more detailed information about access points, parking, facilities, points of interest, and the history of the trail.

This would give the pages a more consistent layout while making the information easier to browse. Below is a preliminary concept to help illustrate some of these ideas. The layout would need further refinement, but it should give a general idea of the direction I'm thinking.

Current Page



Illustrative Concept



Maps & Brochures

The first priority would be reviewing the existing maps and brochures to make sure the information is accurate and up to date.

Small preview images could help visitors know what they're opening before downloading. An interactive Google My Map could also be a useful addition, showing trail routes and points of interest such as parking, boat launches, and camping areas.

I would keep the traditional maps and brochures available. An interactive map would provide another way to explore the area, not replace the existing resources.

Photos

The photo galleries could benefit from newer pictures showing the trails in different seasons. Fall colors, winter activities, and general scenery would help visitors see what the trails have to offer throughout the year.

I'd also consider adding categories for landmarks, wildlife, and wildflowers. Some existing galleries, particularly those showing trail construction and maintenance, have historical value and could remain.

The biggest priority would be adding more current and varied photos that showcase the experience of visiting the trails.

Supporting the Trails

I'd consider bringing the Membership, Business Partners, and Adopt-a-Mile information together under a broader heading such as **Get Involved** or **Support the Trails**.

This section could make the different ways people can support AVTA easier to find, including:

- Becoming a member
- Volunteering
- Making a donation
- Participating in the Adopt-a-Mile program

A separate volunteer form would make it easier for people to offer their help without having to go through the membership process. I'd also include information about how membership fees and donations help support the trails.

The Business Partners page could be renamed **Supporters** to better represent both businesses and individual supporters, including lifetime members. A short introduction thanking them and explaining how others can become supporters would be a nice addition. Business logos could also provide additional recognition.

The Adopt-a-Mile page could use a more engaging introduction, along with photos showing examples of the work involved. I'd also look at making it easier for visitors to see which sections are available and request one. This could simplify the process for both interested volunteers and the people managing the program.

Other Content Improvements

The Happenings page would benefit from a simple way for AVTA to add announcements, upcoming events, and other news without having to make changes to the website itself. Since AVTA already shares information on Facebook, the website could complement that activity by providing a place for important information visitors may want to find later.

The Policies and Studies & Surveys pages appear to be fine in their current form. I'd recommend reviewing the policies to make sure they reflect current rules and requirements, while keeping historical studies and surveys available as useful reference material.

Overall Thoughts

I don't think the website needs to start over. It already has a good amount of useful information and a foundation to build on.

I think the biggest opportunity is to refresh the content, improve how visitors find information, and do a better job of showcasing the trails and everything the area has to offer.

I'd focus first on the visitor experience: making the homepage more useful, improving the individual trail pages, updating the photos and maps, and making the site easier to use on mobile devices.

From there, improvements to membership, volunteering, announcements, and other organizational information can help AVTA better connect with the people who use and support the trails.

The goal should be a website that is useful to visitors today and manageable for AVTA to keep current going forward.