MONMOUTH UNIVERSITY

Contemporary Rhetoric and Service Learning: Dr. Wright-Werner's EN 547.01

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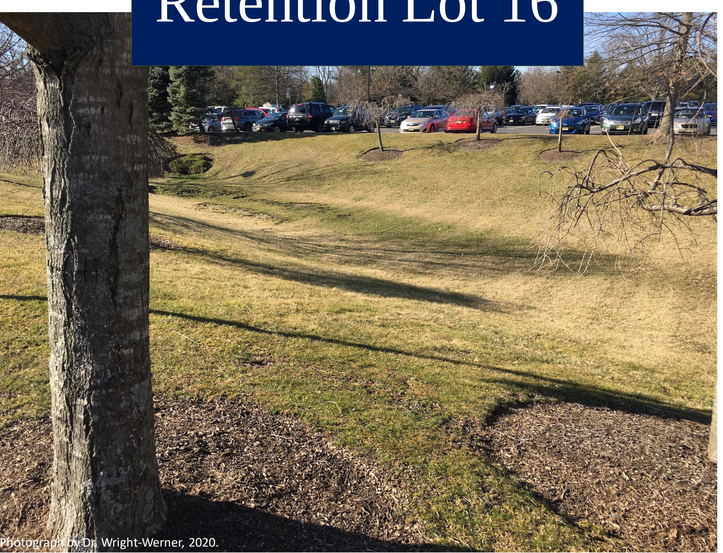
Photograph by Dr. Wright-Werner, 2020.

Rain Garden

The purpose of a rain garden at Monmouth University is to promote the practice of sustainability and to raise awareness about environmental stewardship. With the increasing impact of climate change, it is important to promote these values in the Monmouth community and beyond. A rain garden is a low-maintenance and cost-effective project that would also reintegrate native species and benefit the people around it. It would serve as a meeting place for the campus community where people could enjoy the fruit from plants such as chokeberries and blueberries. Wild animals, too, would benefit from this because it would encourage birds and raptors (such as hawks) to visit the site, resulting in a more balanced ecosystem. Most importantly, it would reaffirm the university's commitment to environmental consciousness and further establish its commitment as a leader in sustainability. Our audience for our rain garden proposal was Dr. Duckett, Associate Dean of Monmouth's School of Science and Ms. Swannack, Vice President of Administrative Services.

Retention Lot 16



Photograph by Dr. Wright-Werner, 2020.

Reflections

Regarding the rain garden as a group effort, we knew there was much research that needed to be done in a short amount of time. We also knew of the necessity to have an innovative design which fit in with the Monmouth University brand. Regarding the web articles, we needed to ensure that they did not overlap, were cohesive, and were completed in a timely manner.

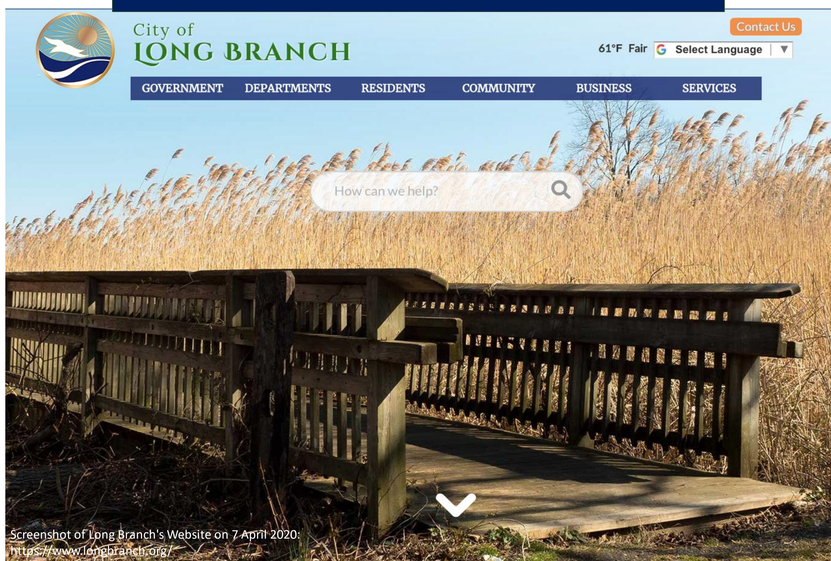
These projects strengthened our commitment to our project and to our environmental citizenship because we were working together to make a real difference in the world. There is more research than one may initially realize involved with researching for real-world application. Not only did we have to research the points addressed in our web articles and the science behind which plants would be better for our rain garden, but we also needed to do research regarding our audience. Having two audiences for two different projects helped to highlight the differences in composition for each. For our rain garden proposal, it was important to sound knowledgeable as well as convincing that our plan was worth choosing. For a web articles, we not only wanted to sound knowledgeable, but we also wanted to write something our audience would want to read.

In this project, we conducted research on three different kinds of rhetoric: spatial rhetoric, design rhetoric, and the rhetoric of sustainability. By doing so, we began to realize that the different kinds of rhetoric were in conversation with one another. We spent a lot of time focusing on the concept of "environmental citizenship" (where people can do what they can to contribute to a sustainable society) and kept that in mind when we started designing the rain garden (Leibowitz and Trudeau 719).

Web Content

The web article content for the Long Branch Environmental Commission is meant for members of the Long Branch community interested in helping to preserve the natural world. These community members are open to eco-friendly ideas; they believe that the Earth's climate is changing and that they can impact it. These articles fulfill the Long Branch community's need for environmentally-friendly guidance on topics ranging from different types of gardening to recycling and minimizing plastics use. The articles are based on popular and academic research in order to cater to the individuals who reside in the Long Branch community. We wanted to give the community a knowledgeable resource on what they can do to help the environment in an accessible format.

Long Branch's Website



Screenshot of Long Branch's Website on 7 April 2020: https://www.longbranch.org/