LAMBO.ROCKS REBUILD · DESIGN REVIEW · OCTOBER 7, 2026

Good bones. Not yet a place you'd want to ride.

An honest judge's read on the current preview, what the best outdoor nonprofits do that we don't, and a staged plan to get there. Written for Eddie first; shareable with the board.

STRUCTURE & CONTENT
Strong

VISUAL IMPACT
Flat

CONVERSION (JOIN / GIVE / SUBSCRIBE)
Underpowered

SENSE OF PLACE
Missing

What is already right

- **The information architecture is excellent.** Trails, Conditions, Events, Bike Patrol, About, with Join and Donate on every page. Short links for posters. Old URLs redirect. Most nonprofit sites never get this right.
- **Content is data.** Conditions, campaigns, sponsors, board and events all live in files a routine can rewrite. That is the foundation for the automations.
- **The palette is honest.** Olive, clay, sand and ember are LAMBO's colors, and the "ember means money" rule is a smart constraint.
- **The writing has a voice.** "Built by neighbors." "Half off one event of your choosing." The InSayner page is genuinely funny. Keep that.
- **Live conditions strip.** The idea of a status bar on every trail-related page is the right instinct. It just needs to feel alive.

The critique

Ranked by how much each one is holding the site back. Red stripes are the ones a board member would notice in the first ten seconds.

1. IT READS AS A BROCHURE, NOT A TRAIL

The hero is a block of text next to a small framed 4:3 photo. Every section below it is a row of identical cream cards with a 1px border. Nothing is big, nothing bleeds, nothing moves. World-class outdoor sites lead with one photograph or film clip that fills the screen, one sentence, one button. Ours leads with a paragraph.

2. NO SENSE OF THE NORTHWOODS

Take the logo away and this could be a trail org anywhere. There are no lakes, no pines, no snow, no seasons, no Musky fish, no ski-hill history. The topo pattern is the only place-specific texture, and it is on every dark panel until it becomes wallpaper. The site should feel different in January than in July. The Zip is groomed; that is a story most trail orgs cannot tell.

3. THE PHOTOGRAPHY IS DOING NONE OF THE LIFTING

The library is phone snapshots: group shots, work days, podiums. Great for news, weak for heroes. There are maybe six images that can carry a full screen. This is the single biggest lever and no amount of CSS fixes it. A half day with a local photographer (Suzanne Clements is already a sponsor) and twenty minutes of drone footage over Musky Mountain would change the site more than anything in this plan.

4. THE ASK IS DILUTED

The homepage shows four full membership cards, a campaign card, a donate footer link and a sponsor button. Four cards means four decisions. POW and 1% for the Planet make one ask per screen and repeat it in the same words. The homepage should make the Join ask once, big, with the price and the one-sentence reason, and send people to the membership page to choose a level.

5. EVERYTHING IS THE SAME WEIGHT

Trail cards, event cards, news cards, tier cards, sponsor tiles and sidebar boxes all share one card style. When everything is boxed, nothing is important. The eye needs one hero, one or two big moments, and quiet in between.

6. THE CONDITIONS STRIP LOOKS LIKE A STATUS PAGE

Four small chips that all say "Open · May 2" in a dark bar. The report is five months old and the strip says so. This should be the heartbeat of the site: today's weather at the trailhead, whether it rained last night, when the Zip was last groomed, pulled live so it is never stale.

7. NUMBERS THAT DON'T LAND

"4 trail systems · 27+ miles · 2006 · 100%" is correct but generic. The impact band should be the numbers only LAMBO has: volunteer hours this year, miles groomed last winter, dollars into dirt, kids through the youth clinic. These must come from Little Green Light or a person, never invented, so the band stays small until we have them.

8. MOBILE IS A LONG, GREY SCROLL

At phone width the home page is roughly eight screens of stacked cards before the footer. Trail cards stack as big images with tiny captions. The Join tiers alone are three screens. The site's main audience is a rider in a parking lot with one hand on a phone; they want status, directions, the next event and Join, in that order, in two screens.

9. SMALL CRAFT ISSUES

The grain overlay is too faint to read as texture. Three typefaces plus a monospace eyebrow is one voice too many. The ember hero glow fights the topo lines. Sponsor logos sit in mismatched white boxes. The news archive is a wall of 60 equal thumbnails with no featured story. Trail detail pages hide the map in a sidebar thumbnail.

What the benchmarks actually do

I looked at how Protect Our Winters, 1% for the Planet and IMBA structure their homepages. Patterns, not looks; LAMBO should look like LAMBO.

- **One thesis per screen.** POW opens with a single urgent line and one button. The mission is one sentence, right under it.
- **Membership is a movement, not a transaction.** "Join Team POW," not "buy a membership." 1% leads every section with "join" language and puts Donate second.
- **Impact numbers count up and are specific.** "$12.8M certified impact · 12,803 businesses · 64 countries." Specific beats round.
- **Photography and film carry the emotion; type carries the message.** Big condensed headlines over full-bleed imagery, with quiet body text.
- **Newsletter gets its own section before the footer**, framed as belonging ("Get updates"), not as a form field.
- **Trail orgs specifically** (IMBA chapters, CAMBA, COPMOBA) put live status and the map above the fold and treat the trail map as a hero object, not a PDF link.

The plan

PHASE 1 · SHIPPED OCT 7, 2026 ON THE PREVIEW

MAKE IT POP: DESIGN PASS V2

- Full-bleed photographic hero with an olive duotone, one headline, one Join button, one Find-a-trail button.
- "Right now" strip under the hero: live weather at the Zip trailhead (free Open-Meteo feed, no key, no cost), four trail status dots, last-groomed date in winter.
- Image-led trail cards with status, miles, difficulty and a groomed badge; hover reveals the tagline.
- Baitfish campaign as a full-width ember band with the meter and days left, not a sidebar card.
- One Join moment on the homepage: price, reason, button. Tiers stay on the membership page.

- Hand-drawn pine-ridge and lakeshore SVG dividers between sections; topo reserved for the hero and footer only; grain made visible.
- Photo mosaic "Life on the trail" from the best existing shots, with captions, so the community shows up on the homepage.
- "The Dirt" newsletter as its own band mid-page, with real copy about what is in it.
- Sponsor wall with equal tiles, grouped by tier, real logos.
- Trail detail pages: full-bleed hero, stats bar, big map, live Trailforks reports widget, trailhead weather.
- Mobile: hero, status, next event and Join within two screens; sticky bottom bar with Conditions / Directions / Join on trail pages.
- Gentle motion: sections fade up on scroll, meter fills, numbers count. All of it off when the visitor asks for reduced motion.

PHASE 2 · NEEDS EDDIE'S INPUTS

MAKE IT LAMBO'S

- Apply the mood board: art direction, textures, illustration style, seasonal variants (summer dirt, fall leaves, winter groomed).
- New photography and 20 to 40 seconds of film for the hero. Shot list: Zip berm at golden hour, Musky Mountain from the top, groomed Zip at dawn, Raven skills course, kids on the pump track, a work day.
- Real impact numbers from Little Green Light and the trail bosses: members, donors, volunteer hours, miles groomed.
- Little Green Light + Stripe forms replace the PayPal links; Join buttons open the LGL form in place.
- Strava club widget on the trails page (needs the club id); Instagram grid in the footer (needs a token or a routine that pulls posts into a JSON file).
- Per-trail pages get a GPX download and a "ride this with" route list from Trailforks.

PHASE 3 · AUTOMATIONS

KEEP IT ALIVE WITHOUT ANYONE TOUCHING CODE

- **Conditions routine:** trail bosses fill a short form; a scheduled routine rewrites `conditions.json` and the site redeploys. Rider reports from Trailforks shown alongside, clearly labeled.
- **Campaign routine:** nightly read of Little Green Light totals into `campaigns.json`. The Baitfish meter stops being hand-edited.
- **Grooming routine:** groomer logs a run (form or Strava activity); the Zip page shows "groomed 6 hours ago."
- **The Dirt draft:** monthly Mailchimp draft assembled from the month's news, events and conditions; a person approves and sends.
- **Photo intake:** drop photos in a Drive folder; routine resizes to the site's image rules and files them under the right trail.

Outside data: what works today

SOURCE	WHAT WE'D SHOW	STATUS	NOTES
Open-Meteo weather	Temperature, wind, rain and snow at each trailhead	WORKS	Free, no key, no account. Tested against the Zip trailhead coordinates.
Trailforks	Live interactive map and recent rider reports per region	EMBEDDED	Zip = 33296, Musky = 60485, Raven = 10925. The old slugs in our data were dead and are fixed. Map and reports widgets are on the Zip, Musky and Raven pages. Trailforks blocks automated browsers, so Eddie should confirm the map shows in his own browser. Sucker Springs has no Trailforks region yet; worth adding.
Strava	Club's latest rides, member count	NEED CLUB ID	I couldn't find a LAMBO Strava club publicly. If one exists, the club page's "embed" code gives us a widget. If not, creating one is free.
Instagram	Latest posts grid	PHASE 2	Needs an access token or a routine. Meta's embed rules changed; cheapest path is a routine

			that saves recent posts to JSON.
Little Green Light	Campaign totals, member count, donor count	PHASE 3	You have access. Totals flow through `campaigns.json`; nothing is invented in the meantime.
Google Drive	Minutes, newsletters, trail boss form responses, photos	PHASE 3	Routines read; the site only links.

What I need from you

1. **THE MOOD BOARD.** Even rough. Textures, illustration references, three sites you love, three you hate.
2. **SIX TO TEN HERO-GRADE PHOTOS** if any exist outside the old site: drone shots, golden hour, winter grooming. Or a yes to asking Suzanne Clements for a half day.
3. **BAITFISH'S REAL TOTAL** so the meter shows something true, and whether LAMBOO has a start time yet.
4. **STRAVA CLUB ID** if LAMBO has one, or a yes to creating one.
5. **IMPACT NUMBERS YOU'RE CONFIDENT IN:** members, volunteer hours last year, miles groomed last winter, kids at the youth clinic. Only what you'd defend at a board meeting.
6. **ANY HARD RULES** for the board: must-keep elements, anything legal (501(c)(3) wording, land partner acknowledgments).

How we'll know it worked

Three numbers, checked monthly: Join-button clicks to the membership form, new subscribers to The Dirt, and dollars given online. Cloudflare's free analytics give us page views

and clicks without cookies or a banner. If a design change doesn't move one of these three or make a rider's parking-lot visit faster, it's decoration.