

November 2021

CONTENT AUDIT & ANALYSIS

American Forests



Prepared by: Melinda Garza

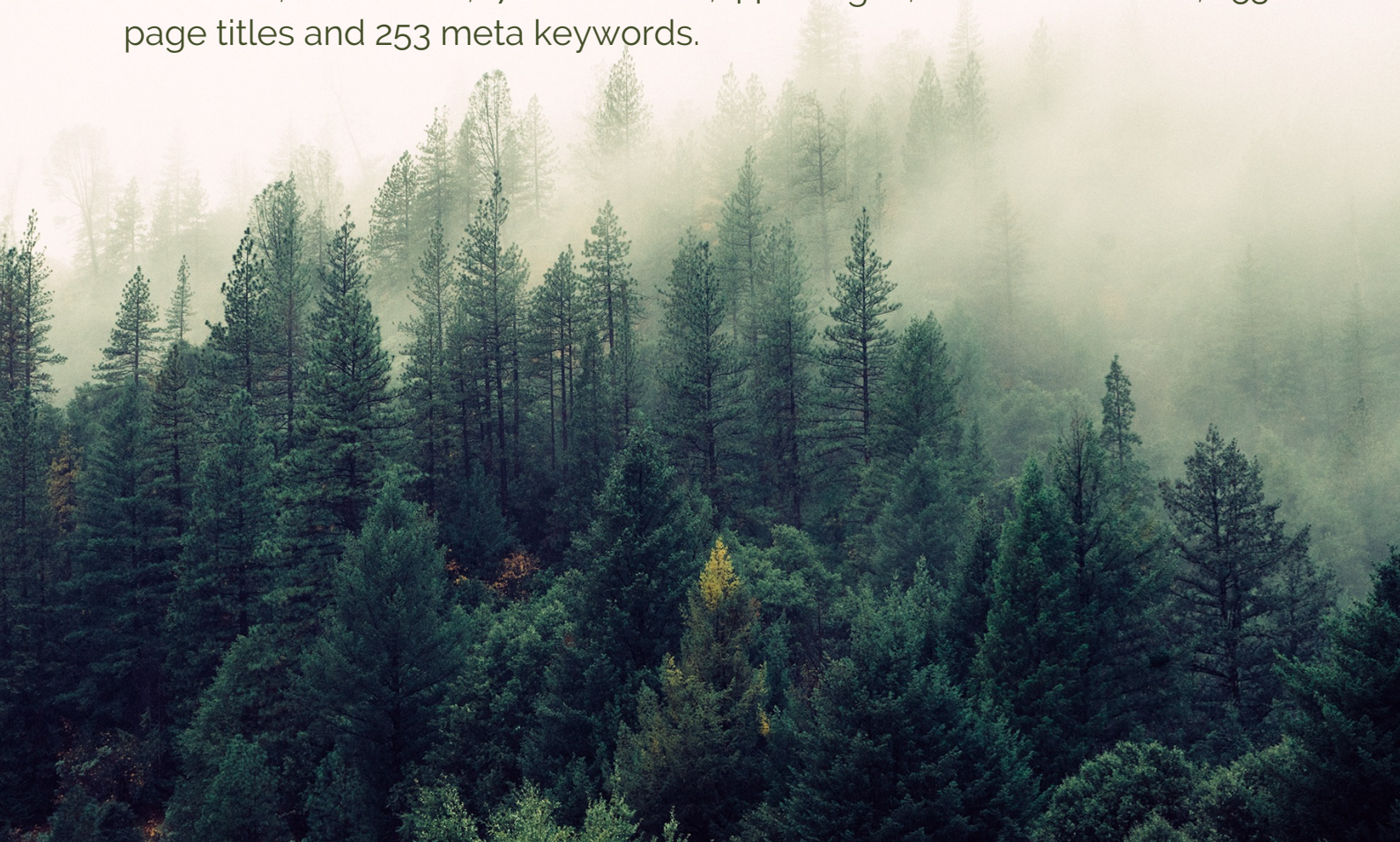
SUMMARY

The following report is a Content Audit and Analysis of the American Forests website. [American Forests](#) is the oldest national nonprofit conservation organization in the United States. This report will provide an in-depth analysis of its website based on data collected by Screaming Frog Search Engine Optimization (SEO) Spider Crawler, an SEO audit tool.

Among the data analyzed in this audit includes: Page Title elements, Meta Descriptions and Keywords, a Writing, Content and Image review, Website Architecture, Accessibility and its Headers.

OVERVIEW

The American Forests website is extremely visual, while still providing educational content throughout the website. Based on the data collected, there are 1,671 total URLs, 441 images, 18 external PDFs, 253 page titles and 253 meta keywords.



ABOUT AMERICAN FORESTS

Since their founding in 1875, American Forests has worked toward creating and maintaining healthy forests across the United States. The nonprofit organization has championed the creation of the U.S. Forest Service and persuaded Congress to provide stable funding for fighting and preventing forest fires.

Their team of more than 50 individuals includes scientists, experts in urban forestry and large-scale forest restoration. There are also those who work to develop tools and conduct scientific research in their Innovation Lab, create partnerships in cities and forest landscapes, and build movements that inspire change related to two of the most pressing issues of the day: climate change and social equity.

Information source: [American Forests](#)



MISSION & VISION

The organization's Mission is to create healthy and resilient forests—from cities to large natural landscapes—that deliver essential benefits for climate, people, water and wildlife.

American Forests envisions a world in which the significant environmental, societal and economic benefits of forests are fully realized and equitably available to all people.

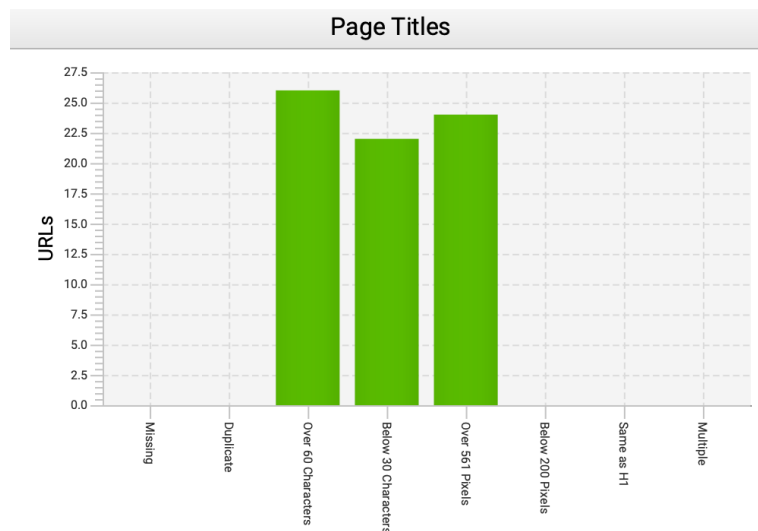
SEO ANALYSIS

SEO analysis is the practice of auditing a website to identify opportunities to improve its placement in search engine results, according to an article on [TreasureData.com](https://www.treasuredata.com).

This practice is a powerful marketing tool as poor search results can negatively affect how a brand, business or person does online. This methodology can not only help ensure a brand is visible to end-users, but it can also create a competitive landscape when tracking industry data and competitors.

Page Titles

There are various ways optimize SEO, including page titles and meta descriptions. American Forests, for instance, uses different titles for each of its 253 page links and does not have a single duplicate. Its shortest title length is 23 characters and its longest is 127.



Scrolling through different pages on their website, the titles do seem to be descriptive which can help users easily find what they're looking for. On its homepage, you'll find titles such as "Give today and help protect forests for tomorrow," "One Nation, Under Trees," "Legislating today for a better climate tomorrow," and "Why Do We Need Forests?" Each of those titles—while a bit long—provides keywords as to why you should click on its corresponding hyperlink. One of their less creative titles on their homepage is "Sharing is Caring," which links to an article about how a new approach to forest management is paying dividends. Though the article was an extremely interesting read, its title was cliché, which may cause readers to look past the story.

Meta Descriptions

In addition to functional page titles, there are various other ways to implement an effective SEO strategy, such as compelling meta descriptions. According to an [article](#) by Just Read, meta descriptions are brief summaries of the page it links to. You can find it as the small blurb that appears beneath a website or when a page is shared on social media.

In a quick Google search of American Forests, for instance, you'll find an incomplete meta description. It does provide information about the organization and its main forest program, but rewording the blurb to complete the brief summary could go a long way in appearance, as well as how users view the website.

<https://www.americanforests.org> :

American Forests: Homepage

Our Resilient **Forests** program focuses on restoring large **forests** in natural landscapes so they can adapt to the impacts of climate change, capture and store ...

[About Us](#) · [Get Involved](#) · [Our History](#) · [Ways to Give](#)

Scrolling through Screaming Frog's meta description data, it's evident the American Forests website has a variety of text in their meta descriptions and does not contain duplicate text. Its shortest meta description is 34 characters and its longest is 476, which was found on one of their magazine issues from 2019. Their meta descriptions are extremely descriptive, which could also contribute to their length. Screaming Frog also found that of its 243 meta descriptions, 36 have more than 155 characters and 101 were missing altogether.

One of their best meta descriptions was a link to a magazine cover that read "Since 1895, the American Forests magazine has been filled with beautiful photographs and informative articles highlighting our nation's forests and trees" because it was well written and provided engaging information.

On the opposite side of interesting descriptions is "American Forests is a nonprofit, tax-exempt charitable organization (tax identification number 53-0242652) under Section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue..." as legalese is often text that users ignore.

<https://www.americanforests.org> :

American Forests: Homepage

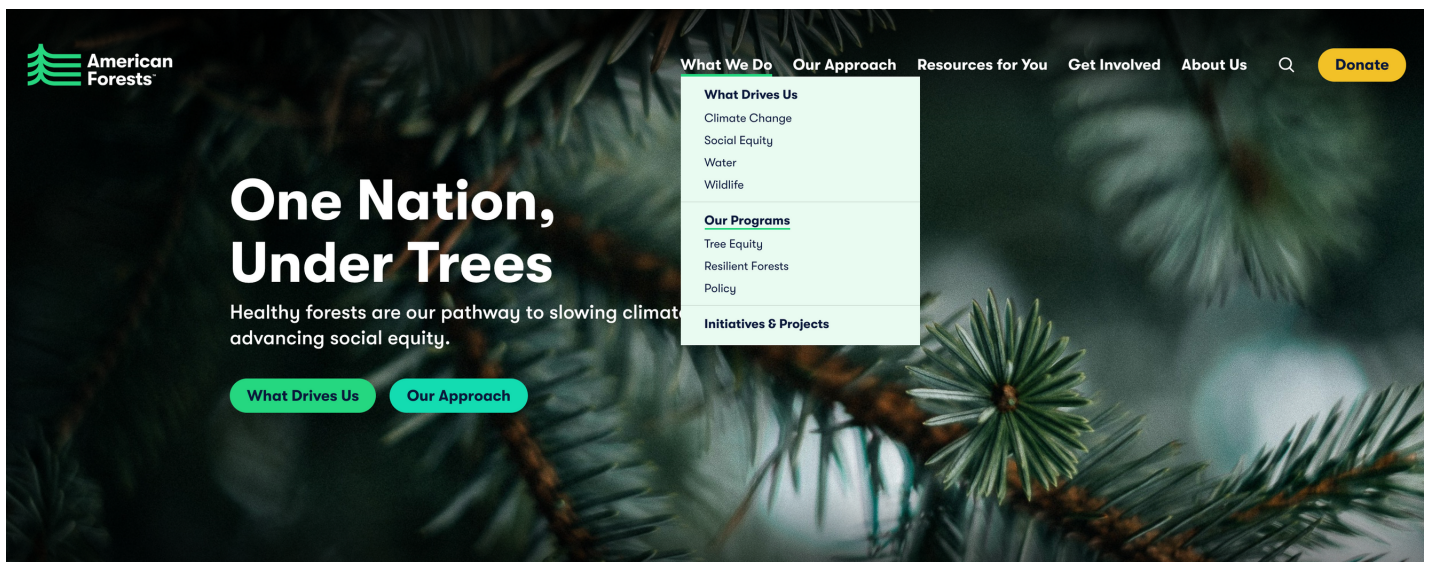
American Forests is a nonprofit, tax-exempt charitable organization (tax identification number 53-0242652) under Section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue ...

Headers

The website does make use of HTML header elements, though a large portion of both H1s and H2s are either missing (214 out of 253 H1s) or a duplicate (170 of 253 H2s).

Address	Occurrences	H2-1
https://www.americanforests.org/take-action/take-action-infrastructure-bill/		2 What We Do
https://www.americanforests.org/personnel/gisel-garza/		2 What We Do
https://www.americanforests.org/article/bulleit-american-forests/		2 What We Do
https://www.americanforests.org/personnel/kendall-delyser/		2 What We Do
https://www.americanforests.org/take-action/trees-act/		2 What We Do
https://www.americanforests.org/article/statement-on-build-back-better-act-framework/		2 What We Do
https://www.americanforests.org/personnel/sara-kangas/		2 What We Do
https://www.americanforests.org/article/rehabilitating-birds-of-prey-after-life-in-the-city/		2 What We Do
https://www.americanforests.org/personnel/rohit-musthi/		2 What We Do
https://www.americanforests.org/personnel/mushtaaq-ali/		2 What We Do
https://www.americanforests.org/personnel/sarah-schmid/		2 What We Do
https://www.americanforests.org/personnel/sarah-mitchell/		2 What We Do
https://www.americanforests.org/article/climate-smart-restoration/		2 What We Do
https://www.americanforests.org/personnel/emily-pobuda/		2 What We Do
https://www.americanforests.org/article/forest-footnotes/		2 What We Do
https://www.americanforests.org/personnel/tia-singleton/		2 What We Do
https://www.americanforests.org/personnel/benita-hussain/		2 What We Do
https://www.americanforests.org/personnel/christine-moreschi/		2 What We Do

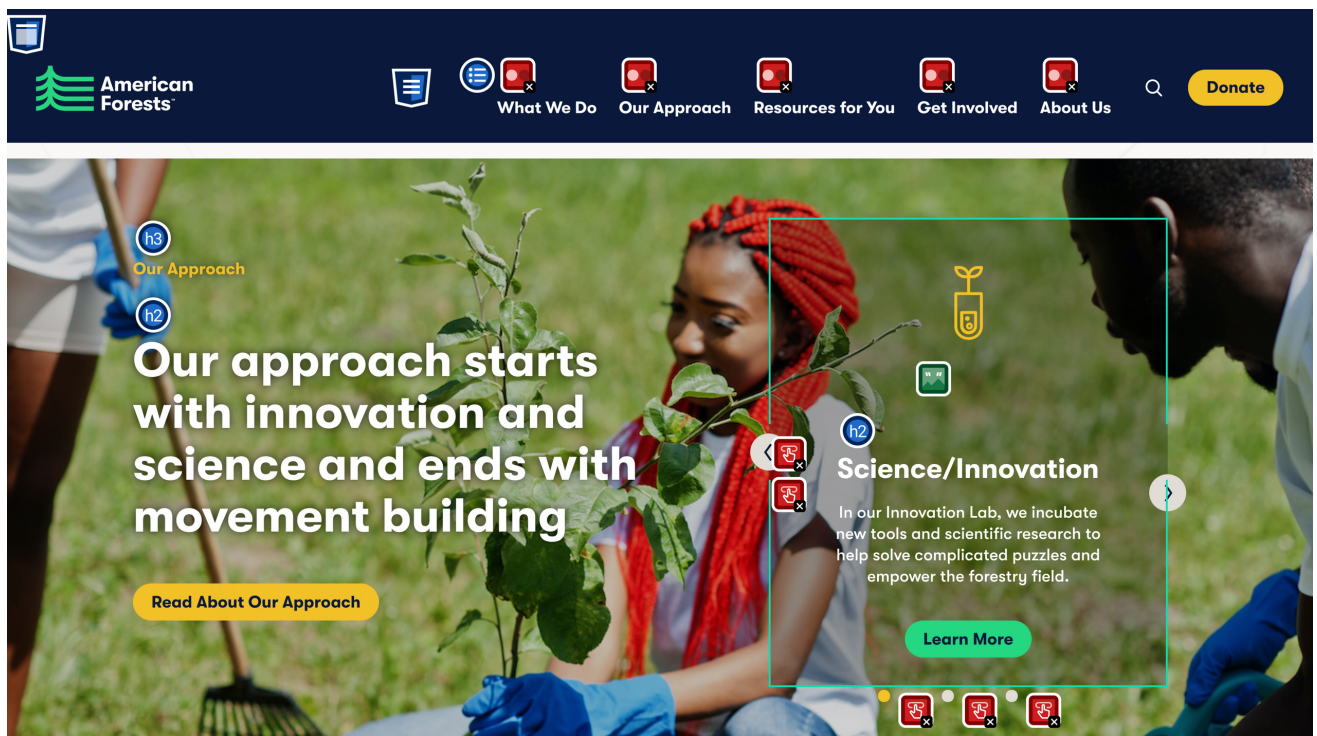
American Forests' header elements do describe the components of the page they are on. For example, a large portion of their duplicate H2s are attributed to their "What We Do" tab. By clicking on any of the links, users will find information on their programs, tree equity, climate change, wildlife and other initiatives and projects.



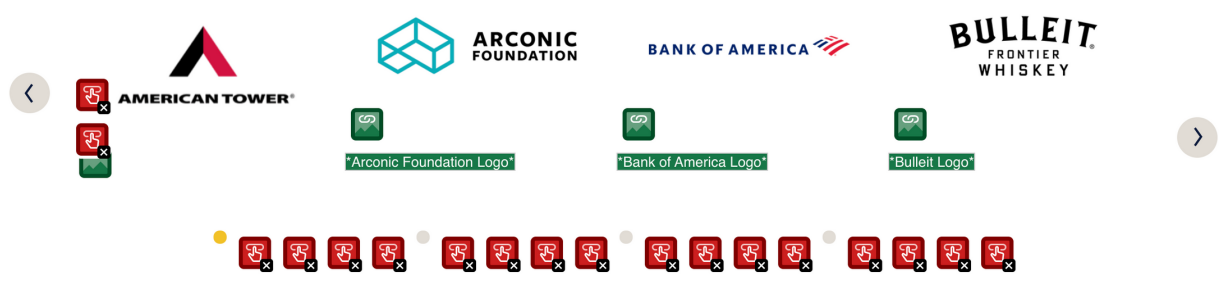
Images & Accessibility

While web accessibility is essential for those with disabilities, it can also benefit businesses and everyone else, according to the Web Accessibility Initiative. When websites are properly designed, those with disabilities can use them with ease, but accessibility barriers can make it impossible for some users to navigate.

Because accessibility is vital, there are many web tools to test whether websites are properly coded for use. The WAVE Web Accessibility Evaluation Tool, for instance, can provide detailed information of a website's user accessibility. When analyzing the American Forests website, it found 60 errors on its homepage alone, seven contrast errors and 67 structural elements alongside its 51 total features.



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Images & Accessibility Cont.

Images should also have alt tags or text, which is meant to convey the “what” of the image as it relates to the content of a document or webpage. Alt-text is primarily used by those who use screen readers to access websites or other online software.

On American Forests, of the 441 images on its website, 178 images are missing alt-text, which means 40 percent of images on this website do not have the added aid for those with a disability.

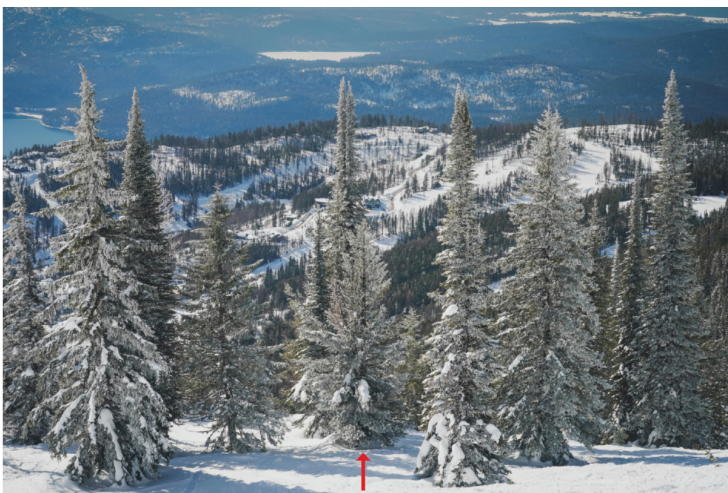
The images that do have alt-text are extremely descriptive and well-written, often having more than 100 characters on each image. The following are examples of images found on the American Forests website that contain a photo description and the same alt-text.



Melissa Jenkins of the U.S. Forest Service inspects a whitebark pine tree in Montana. This tree species is essential to ensuring that high-elevation forests in the western U.S. are healthy.



Tony Incashola Sr. and his son, Tony Incashola Jr., enjoy the views of the landscape, including the high-elevation forests in the distance, at the Flathead Indian Reservation. The father-son team help lead work within the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes to restore the reservation's forests.



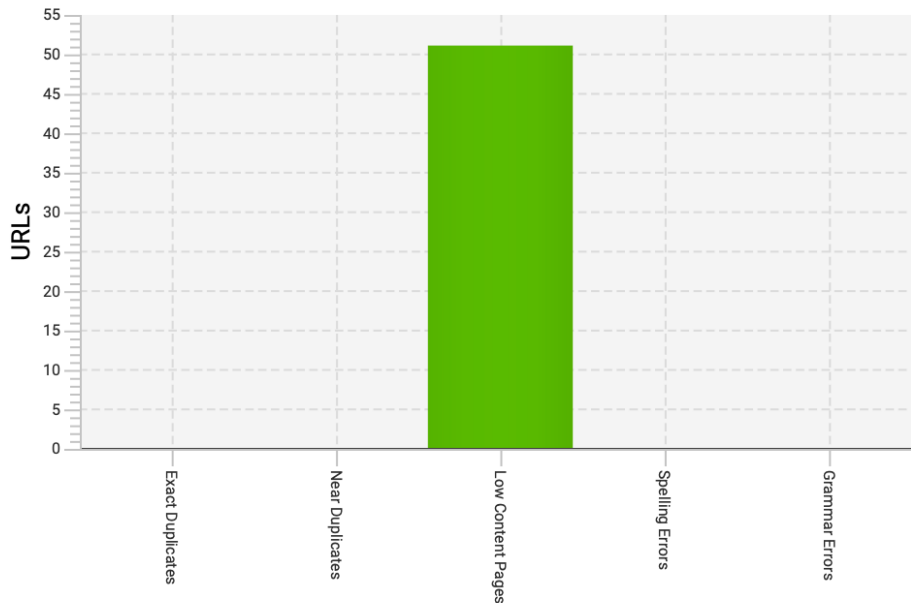
The red arrow points to a whitebark pine tree. It's the first tree species to grow in western U.S. high-elevation forests. They block the wind, allowing other trees, such as the subalpine firs pictured here, to grow to full size.



Controlled burns are a type of forest restoration. This U.S. Forest Service worker is using a drip torch to start fires in Mendocino National Forest, California. Photo Credit: U.S. Forest Service

Content

According to Screaming Frog, the website has 259 total URLs and 51, or 19.69 percent), Low Content Pages, which shows any HTML pages with a word count under 200 words.



Content-wise, American Forests is extremely photo and text-heavy. The website is colorful, but still themed, and their graphics, articles, and beautiful images help enhance the overall user-experience. Because there are 154 national forests, there are ample opportunities to find stories and use original photos.



Resilient Forests Place-Based Partnerships

American Forests creates local partnerships in priority reforestation landscapes, from Texas to California to the Northern Rockies. For instance, over the last 22 years we have worked with partners to plant more than 2 million thornforest trees in the Rio Grande Valley, and we help guide and unify work among many stakeholders to protect the region's wildlife and water.

[Explore Resilient Forests Program](#)

By integrating images and articles throughout their website, page visitors are also able to visualize the nonprofit's mission and goals, as well as help paint a picture as to the physical work they do throughout the country.

Writing

From long-form stories to press releases to research reports, American Forests has a myriad of written content to read through. Though it is largely informative and sounds professional in tone, it is written extremely well, making it appropriate for its audiences but still easy for most people to understand.

November 17, 2021

American Forests Announces Reforest America Carbon Program

American Forests is thrilled to introduce the Reforest America Carbon Program — an exciting new opportunity for public, private, and tribal land managers to access carbon finance in order to plant and maintain climate-adapted carbon-rich forests that remove carbon from the atmosphere.

Since 1990, American Forests has been leading financing innovations to scale-up reforestation including the “dollar per tree” model that allows corporations and individuals to directly support reforestation projects and carbon markets for urban forests through City Forest Credits. All told, we have used these innovations to work with hundreds of partners across the country to reforest over 150,000 acres with 67 million trees. While we are proud of this accomplishment, we know that the climate driven threats facing forests means that we need to dramatically scale up our collective investments in reforestation. This is why we are announcing our Reforest America Carbon Program.

In the example above, which was taken from one of their recent articles, it's clear they are trying to inform their readers about a new program, but by utilizing words like “thrilled” and “exciting,” their voice becomes engaging and a sign to readers that it can be an interesting and enjoyable read.

And while most internet users scroll past Call to Actions, American Forests succeeds in making the writing sound relatable, which can help readers act.



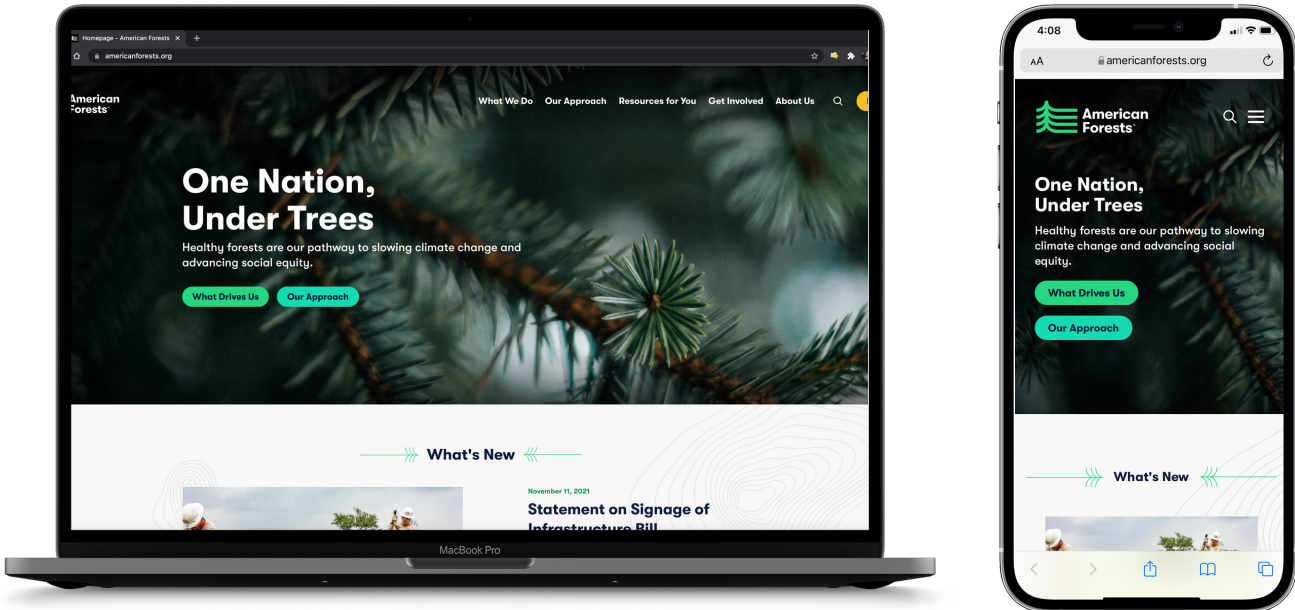
Photo: Annie Spratt

Holiday Gift Guide

Our Gift Guide offers a fantastic variety of products for everyone on your list, from an indulgent dark chocolate ensemble to puffers designed for braving the elements in style. And each gift featured from our corporate partners gives back to American Forests in some way.

[Start shopping](#)

Architecture



The website is extremely mobile friendly. When I searched for something specific on my MacBook's Google Chrome browser, I would search the same keyword or phrase on my iPhone's Safari browser and the results were always identical. Though it's a smaller screen, the text is still legible and icons are easily clickable.

Navigation on the website is strong and user-friendly because of its thorough menu options. Its dropdown options are clear, concise and plainly describe what you'll find when clicking that specific link.

Rather than traditional breadcrumbs you'd find on a retail website with blue hyperlinks to the previous page, American Forests' breadcrumbs fit with its website's theme and look like they are a part of the page's design, as seen below. The website's breadcrumbs, however, are not hyperlinked.



Regardless of the website being easy to navigate, there is a search function and it works extremely well, better than most websites I frequent. I was able to find various articles and pages by testing keywords at random, both on my laptop and my phone.

CONCLUSION

The American Forests website— both desktop and mobile— is easy to navigate through and extremely user-friendly. The five drop-down menus on the homepage provide ample information to help users get to where they need to. Multiple “Donate” buttons also stand out and offer visitors several choices to contribute to their cause. Because their website's audience is mostly donors and volunteers, being able to find information on their mission, as well as contribution options are extremely important.

Their titles, meta descriptions, headers and alt-text are well-written, descriptive and their corresponding hyperlinks take you exactly where they want you to go. Though they mention the importance of their scientists and researchers, the website is not flooded with words or information only they can comprehend, instead, it's clear and concise and reads like it's written for everyone to understand.

The website does have room for growth, especially when it comes to including alt-text in every single image and ensuring its website is as close to 100 percent accessible as possible. I also found page errors when exploring their website. For example, when I clicked the About Us drop down menu and visited their [Newsroom](#), it took me to their Media Inquiries page, which did have correct information. But, when I scrolled to the bottom of the website and clicked [Press Releases & Statements](#), I again found myself on the Media Inquiries page, but instead discovered what looks to be Photoshop placeholder text, which means they also have issues with hyperlinks.

