

# Improving the UX of the Visit Harford App & Website

Project Supervised by Bill Kules, HCIM Program Director  
University of Maryland, College Park  
December 2018

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INST 710, Fall 2018

Supervised by Bill Kules, HCIM Program Director

The University of Maryland, College Park

PALS - Partnership for Action Learning in Sustainability

An Initiative of the National Center for Smart Growth



Gerrit Knaap, NCSG Executive Director

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# Agenda

- **Project Focus**
- **Background Research**
- **Participant Information**
- **Interview Process**
- **Major Findings**
- **Product Concepts**

# Project Focus

- Promote county tourism to visitors
- Expand the website and app's core user group

By understanding the

- Experience of trip planning
- Information required to make decisions



# Background Research

1. Analyzed the Harford County website and app
2. Comparative analysis of similar websites
  - Oregon
  - Idaho
  - Cleveland
3. Analyzed popular trip planning sites

# Participant Information

- 8 participants

#	Age	Profession
3	20 - 30	Undergrad, Grad Students
4	30 - 40	PhD Students, Doctor
1	40 - 60	Administrator



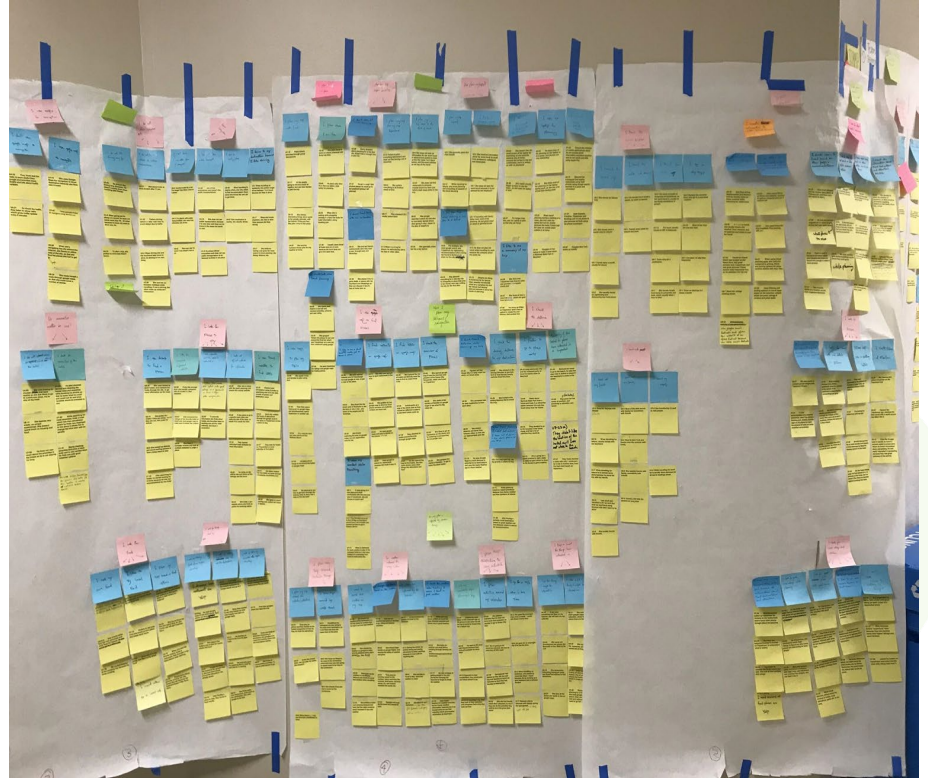
# Interview Process

- On-site interviews
- ~ 60 minutes each
- Retrospective and observational
- Looking to understand
  - process of trip planning
  - information requirements
  - role of technology, friends, and family



# Data Analysis

- Thematic analysis
- Identified
  - types of users
  - workflow and pain points
  - use of technology





# Major Findings

What our users need

Define C

The  
Optimizer  
The Planner

Groups of  
friends  
travelling  
together

2. PROBLEMS / PAINS

Which problems do you solve for your customers?  
There could be more than one, explore different ideas  
eg. existing solar solutions for private houses are not suitable  
as a good investment (1).

X  
TOO MANY  
POINTS FOR  
COMPARISON  
(FI

Hard to  
coordinate  
booking for  
a group.

TOO MANY  
TABS

The main  
restaurant  
info on SR  
could

“

I prefer to plan my own trip and meticulously plan for every minute. I organize my trip as a list of things I want to do and see.



# Insights

- *I plan for nearby activities and attractions*
- *I plan for where I am going to eat while travelling*
- *I plan for where I am going to stay*
- *I check the distance to my destination to estimate travel time*
- *I plan activities according to my calendar*



*Design for easy information discovery and allow users to create a custom trip plan on the website*

# Design Ideas

- *Add option to make itinerary that syncs with your personal calendar*
- *Support trip planning by displaying accurate and up-to-date information about future events*
- *Give weather, based on event options*
- *Give information on the different ways to access and and the time it would take*

“

I like diverse experiences and exploring new things when I have time. I make every moment of my free time count.



# Insights

- *I like to see new places and explore new things*
- *I may change my plans if I discover something new that interests me*
- *I like to visit cultural and historical places*
- *I like to do outdoor activities*
- *I like to meet new people and socialize*



*Design for exploration - highlight nearby activities, and experiences unique to Harford County*

# Design Ideas

- *Advertise interesting and novel experiences — attractions unique to Harford County*
- *Group activities so it's easier to find what people want to do*
- *Suggest pre-planned experiences for travelers to the county*

“

I ask people, check social media and read user reviews to decide what to do, where to stay and where to eat.





# Insights

- *I read user reviews to find people to stay with*
- *I read user reviews to learn more about travel destinations and attractions*
- *I find user reviews a trustworthy source of information*
- *I believe high ratings represent a good experience*



*Design for social experience - show pictures, reviews, ratings and comments from other users*

# Design Ideas

- *Show user testimonials for activities and places in Harford County*
- *Show what people are talking about on social media — Instagram, Facebook and Twitter*
- *Provide discussion threads for people to talk about their experiences and ask questions*

“

Good visuals attract me. I make decisions on where to go, based on the pictures I see. They help me get an overall idea of the place.



# Insights

- *If I like the picture, I look for more information about it*
- *Pictures help me in selecting attractions to visit*
- *I compare images on different websites to make sure the place is as advertised*
- *I visually explore areas to see if I like visiting them*
- *I look at pictures to get a sense of the area*



*Design for visual delight - use pictures to highlight events, activities and more*

# Design Ideas

- *Relevant and important information should be easy to find*
- *Put attractive pictures on the main page. Replace generic stock images on the main webpage with images from the county*
- *Include a virtual tour that allows users to get a sense of Harford County before they visit*

# Common Frustrations

- *I ignore information not relevant to my trip*
- *I find visual clutter distracting and annoying*
- *I find too much information overwhelming*



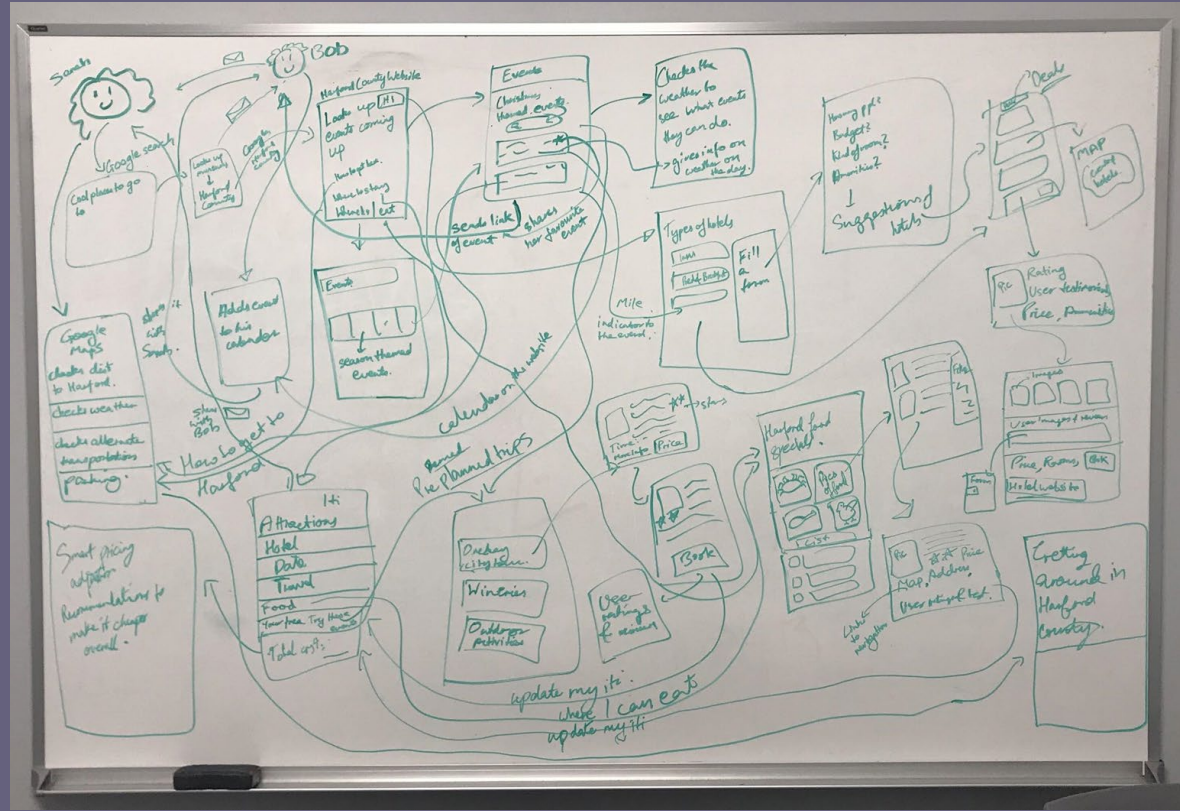
*Extraneous, irrelevant and poorly designed information will cause frustration*

# Product Concepts

A brand new world

# Ideation

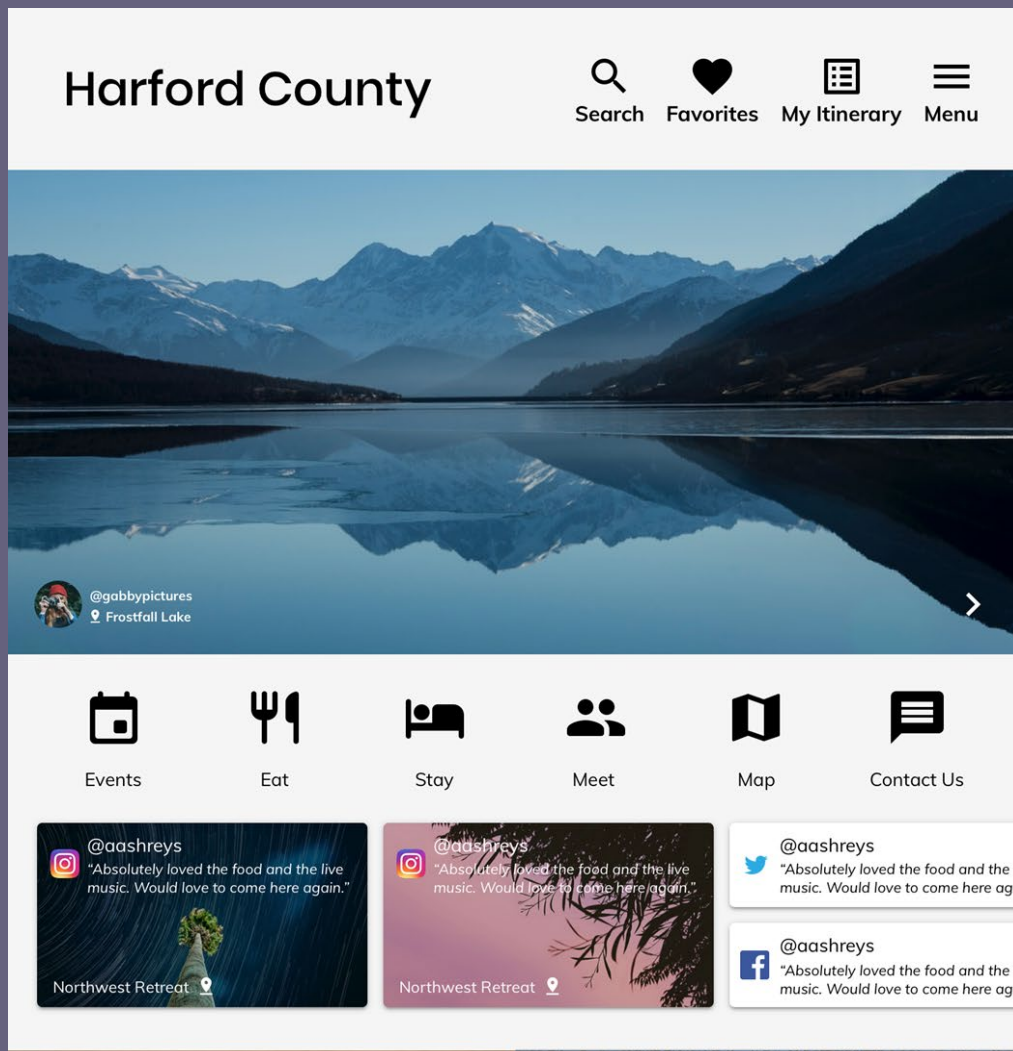
Combining insights into  
cohesive experiences  
through user stories

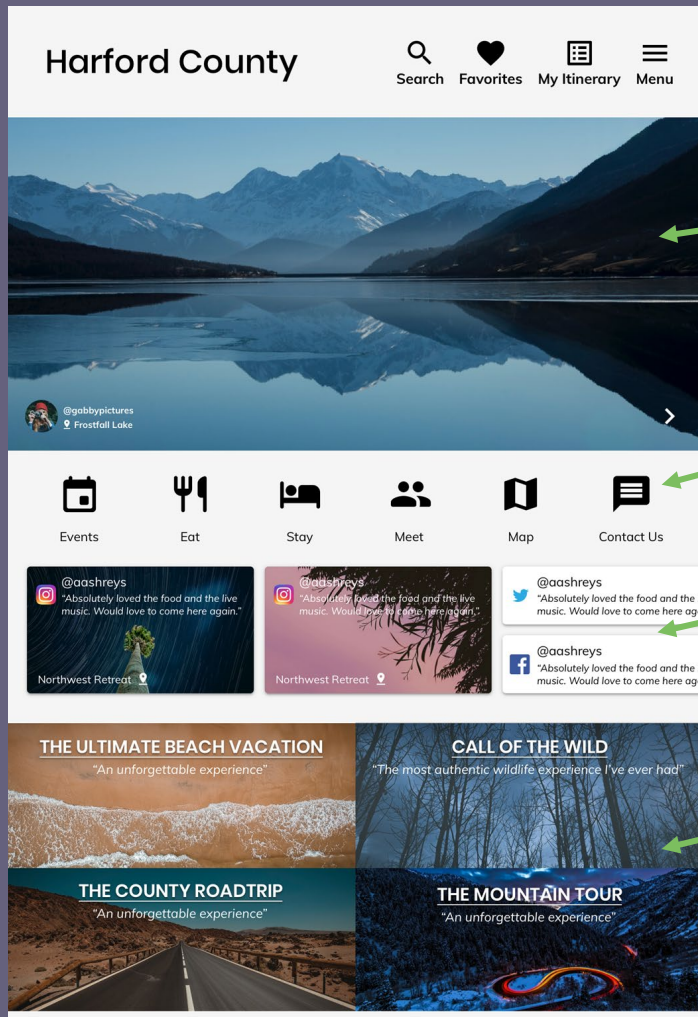




# 1. Home Page

Show everyone how  
fun Harford can be





Stunning pictures from real users to draw in tourists

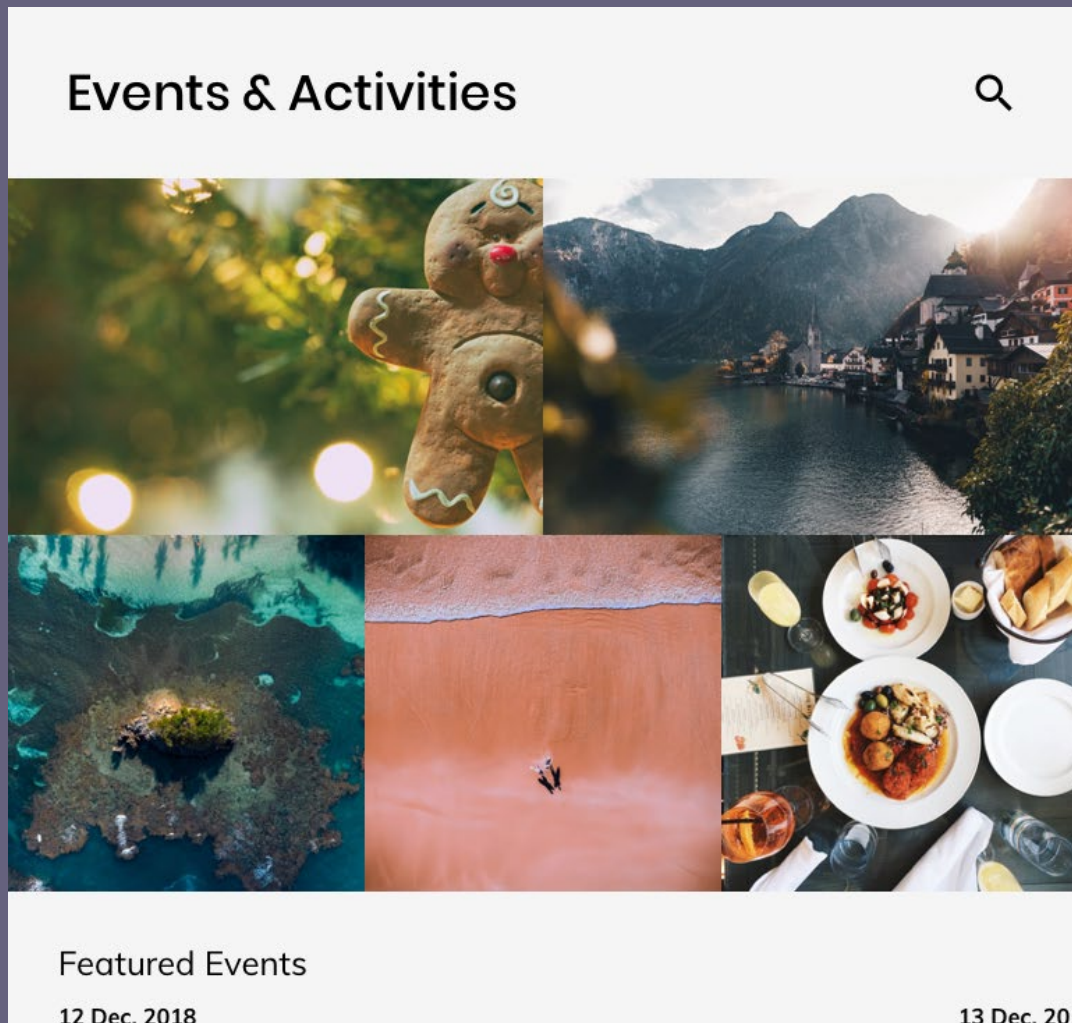
Clear, unobtrusive website functions

Real-time social media feed linked to events to capture the latest buzz

Unique experiences at Harford qualified by impactful testimonials

# 2. Find Events

Let's find your next  
muse



Events & Activities



Featured Events

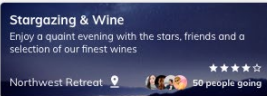
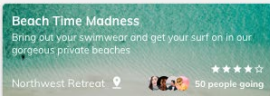
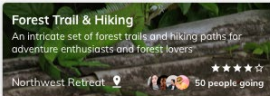
12 Dec. 2018

13 Dec. 2018



## Featured Events

12 Dec, 2018



13 Dec, 2018

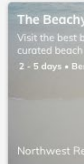


## Curated Trips

12 Dec, 2018

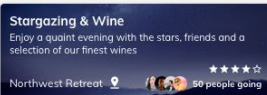
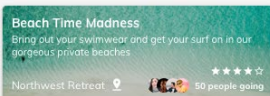
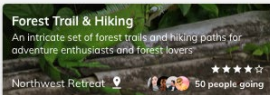


13 Dec, 2018



## Upcoming Events

12 Dec, 2018



13 Dec, 2018



Spark curiosity with visuals  
and event details

### Stargazing & Wine

Enjoy a quaint evening with the stars, friends and a selection of our finest wines

★★★★☆  
Northwest Retreat 50 people going

Show ratings and who else is going to  
encourage further exploration

Create curated event lists to appeal  
to people's diverse interests



# Seafood Festival



Come join us for an evening of great food and good vibes!

Vivamus sagittis lacus vel augue laoreet rutrum faucibus dolor auctor. Praesent commodo cursus magna, vel scelerisque nisl consectetur et. Etiam porta sem malesuada magna mollis euismod. Vestibulum id ligula porta felis euismod semper. Integer posuere erat a ante venenatis dapibus posuere velit aliquet. Nullam quis risus eget urna mollis ornare vel eu leo. Vivamus sagittis lacus vel augue laoreet rutrum faucibus dolor auctor.

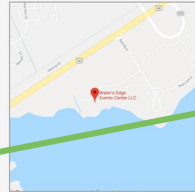
## Timings

12, 13, 14, Dec 2018

2 - 4 pm, 6 - 9 pm

BOOK

ADD TO ITINERARY



What people are saying...

## Reviews (53)

## Comments (24)



Rachel  
★★★★☆

"Absolutely loved the food and the live music. Would love to come here again."



Jessica  
★★★★☆

"Absolutely loved the food and the live music. Would love to come here again."



Leigh  
★★★★☆

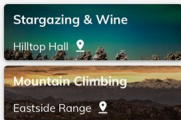
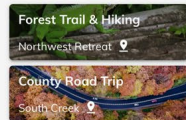
"Absolutely loved the food and the live music. Would love to come here again."



Dave  
★★★★☆

"Absolutely loved the food and the live music. Would love to come here again."

More events to discover...



Pictures from real user's social media perceived as genuine

A map that opens to show the event and nearby activities

User reviews increase confidence and provide recommendations

Organizer contact information to answer any questions

Related and nearby events to create a cohesive trip



Kate

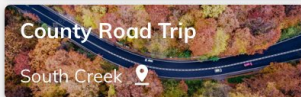
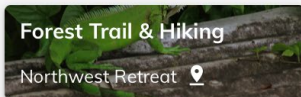
### Pictures tagged #harfordcounty



### Check-ins



### Highly Rated



Ask Kate

Viewing a user's highlights through social media tags

Map that shows their check -ins to promote event discovery

A collection of the experiences they liked and recommend

# 3. Smart Itinerary

Your trip, at a glance

## Your Itinerary

People



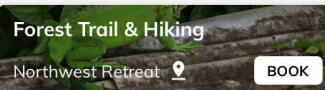
**Staying At** Chateau Grande

### Upcoming Events

12th Dec

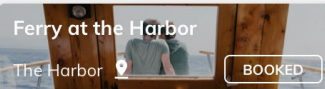
9 - 12 pm

58 F



2 - 4 pm

62 F



13th Dec

Free  
Morning

Add Event

6 - 9 pm

43 F



**Estimated Cost** \$ 300.00

ADJUST

DOWNLOAD PDF

SEND

SYNC TO CALENDAR

## Adjust Budget

**Current Cost** \$300.00

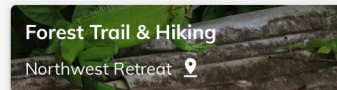
**Target Cost** \$200.00

### Suggestions

12th Dec

9 - 12 pm

58 F



Replace  
with



Savings: \$100

ACCEPT

REJECT

Cheaper  
on

**14th Dec, 4 - 6 pm**

Savings: \$50

ACCEPT

REJECT

**Savings** \$100.00

**New Cost** \$300.00


## Your Itinerary

People  +


Staying At Chateau Grande 

### Upcoming Events

12th Dec

9 - 12 pm  
 58 F


Forest Trail & Hiking

Northwest Retreat 

BOOK

2 - 4 pm  
 62 F

Ferry at the Harbor

The Harbor 

BOOKED

13th Dec

Free  
Morning

Add Event

6 - 9 pm  
 43 F

Wine & Dine

Chateau Grande 

BOOK

Estimated Cost \$ 300.00

ADJUST

DOWNLOAD PDF

SEND

SYNC TO CALENDAR

Upcoming events, with  
booking status

Prompts to add events  
from favorites

Intelligent suggestions  
for saving money —  
alternate events or dates

## Adjust Budget

Current Cost \$300.00

Target Cost \$200.00 

### Suggestions

12th Dec

9 - 12 pm  
 58 F

Forest Trail & Hiking

Northwest Retreat 

Replace  
with

Nature Retreat

Fellsfield Park 

Savings: \$100

ACCEPT

REJECT

Cheaper  
on

14th Dec, 4 - 6 pm

Savings: \$50

ACCEPT

REJECT

Savings \$100.00

New Cost \$300.00



# Questions?