Niantic River Watershed Monitoring
Working Group Meeting

Date: April 13th 2010
Time: 5-6 pm
Place: Waterford Town Hall

Meeting Minutes

Attendance:

Present: Sarah Lamagna, Scott Gravatt, Eric Thomas, Kim Barber, John Jasper, Don Danila, Fred Grimsey, Don Landers, Dave Turner, Judith Rondeau
Absent: Katherine Burton, Chris Tomichek
Regrets: Franca Parra, Dick Mason, Dave Lersch

1. **Announcement from Sarah**

   i. Sarah announces that she is leaving the Eastern CT Conservation District and will be stepping down as the Niantic River Watershed Coordinator. She has had a pleasure coordinating these groups and wish them all the best in the future.

   ii. ECCD has already hired a new Natural Resource Specialist (and therefore the new Niantic River Coordinator): Judy Rondeau. She will send everyone an email when she is set up with an email account. All correspondence will go through her after Friday, April 15th.

2. **Long Island Sound Futures Fund**

   i. As discussed at previous meetings, the Niantic River Watershed Advisory Committee will be teaming up with Save the River-Save the Hills to apply for a grant through the Long Island Sound Futures Fund. We'll be submitting a grant to become an official organization and to cover lawyer's fees, etc. Fred and Sarah will be doing the application. Even though Sarah will be leaving ECCD and will no longer be the Niantic River Coordinator, she will help out Fred as much as possible until the deadline on May 7th, 2010.

      a. This group suggested we look at some pilot projects for stormwater utility and maybe work with groups like this to, eventually, have some regulatory power.

      b. Some people think that becoming a regulatory organization too soon would be bad and we have to stay on the town's good side.

3. **Long Island Sound Research Fund**

   i. The Long Island Sound Research Fund will be coming out with an RFP soon. John Jasper will be teaming up with Craig Tobias and Frank Bohlen from UConn to do some scientific monitoring type studies. This would include understanding sulfide production and doing a sedimentary history of eutrophication. They'd like to see the change of organic sediments over the entire course of the River including fresh and saltwater and whether the organic sediments are terrestrial or marine.

   ii. When doing this grant application we should show that this type of sampling and monitoring would be following the NRWPP and that this type of work/way of sampling can be used for several different types of estuaries.

4. **Website**

The domain for the Niantic River Watershed website was renewed since it was expiring at the end of the April 2010. Also, the webhost was switched to incorporate a new tool called WordPress. This tool allows the website information (not the aesthetic look of the website) to be altered from anywhere that has an internet connection; however, you have to be added as an administrator to make any changes. For now, the only administrator is the Niantic River Coordinator. This tool was put on the website so that in the future, when there is a Niantic River Watershed Committee legally set up, alterations can be easily implemented to the website by the selected board members. A manual for WordPress has been developed by the Niantic River Coordinator that can be distributed to the board as needed. Tutorials on how to use Word Press are online at http://geekdesigngirl.com/tutorials/.

The new website layout has been completely redesigned to make a more current, "eye-pleasing, and user-friendly site and to make maneuvering around the site much easier. A photo slideshow has been put up on the homepage so people can see what the Niantic River and Niantic Bay looks like to connect them to the watershed. The new headings and subheadings make the information on the website easier to peruse and navigate.

The former site was very basic and included headings such as Home, The Watershed, What Can You Do?, News & Events, and Contacts without any subheadings (making it much harder to navigate the site). The new site has headings and subheadings as follows:

I: Home
II: About
- i The Watershed
- ii NRWAC
- iii Niantic River Coordinator
- iv Meetings

III: News
- i Current News

ii Archives

IV: Our Services

i Education
ii Monitoring
iii Outreach

V: Contact Us

i Partners

VI: FAQ

VII: What Can You Do?

i Our Impacts
ii The Solutions

The website also includes widgets (a small, portable application or piece of dynamic content that can easily be placed into a Web page or an embedded browser within a rich client). These widgets can be found on the right hand side of the website and displays a banner stating (Be a NIMBY for the Niantic) and the current news stories that have been published.

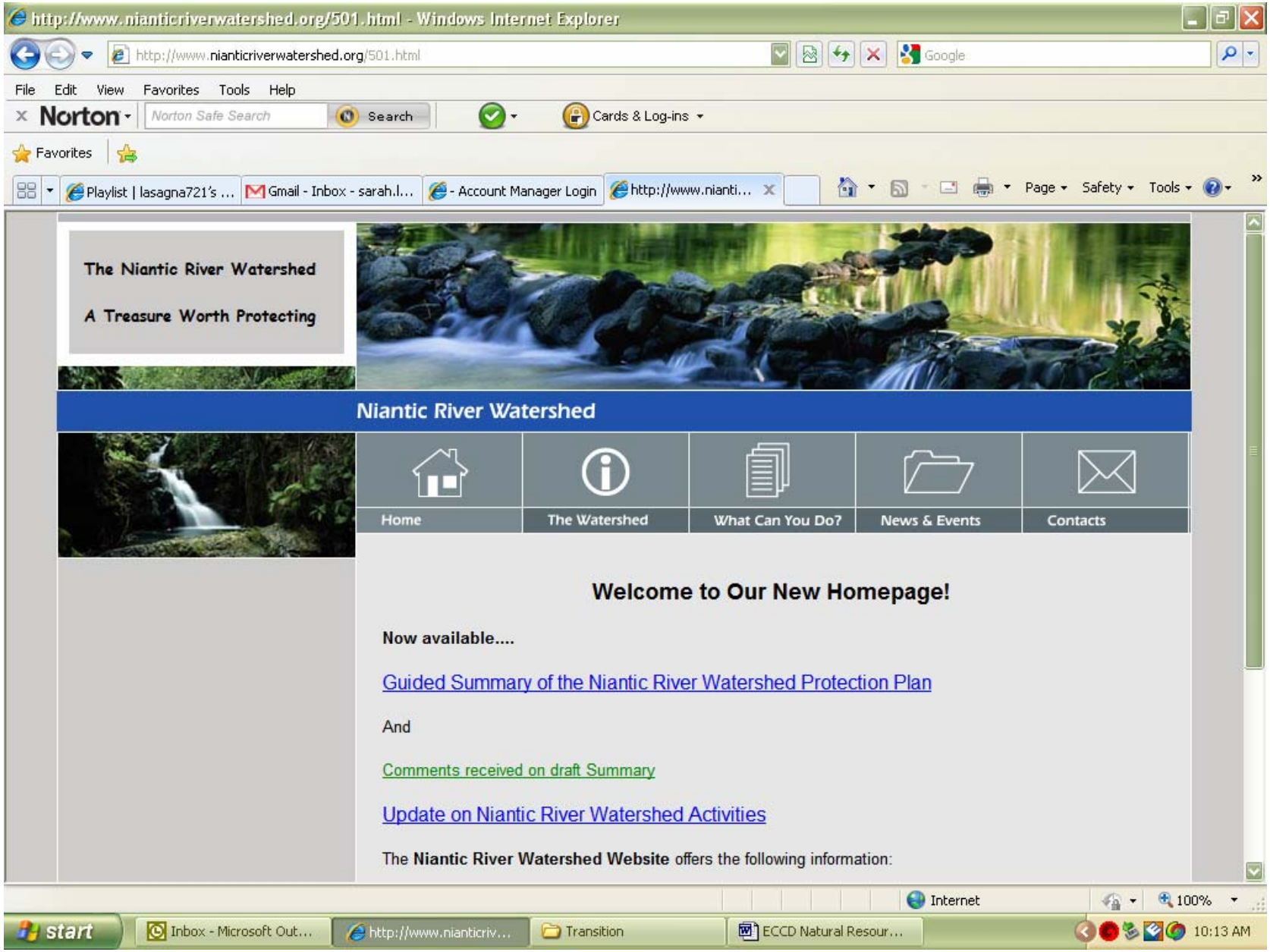
The Coordinator has been updating the site with agendas, minutes, presentations, and local news stories about the Niantic River and the Niantic River Watershed Advisory Committee throughout the year. More photos and information has been put up on the website so give people an idea about what the NRWAC does and where they want to go in the future.

Also, Google Analytics has been added to the page (through html code) which shows the administrator not only who has visited the website but what pages they looked at and how they got to the homepage. This is important to look at closely so that we can see what search engines people use to get to our site and where, in the future, we can advertise.

Attachment A shows what the previous website looked like while Attachment B shows the additions made to the current website. To see the updated website at its fullest, please visit www.nianticriverwatershed.org.

5. **Next meeting May 11th, 4:00-5:00 pm**

Attachment A. Old Website Layout



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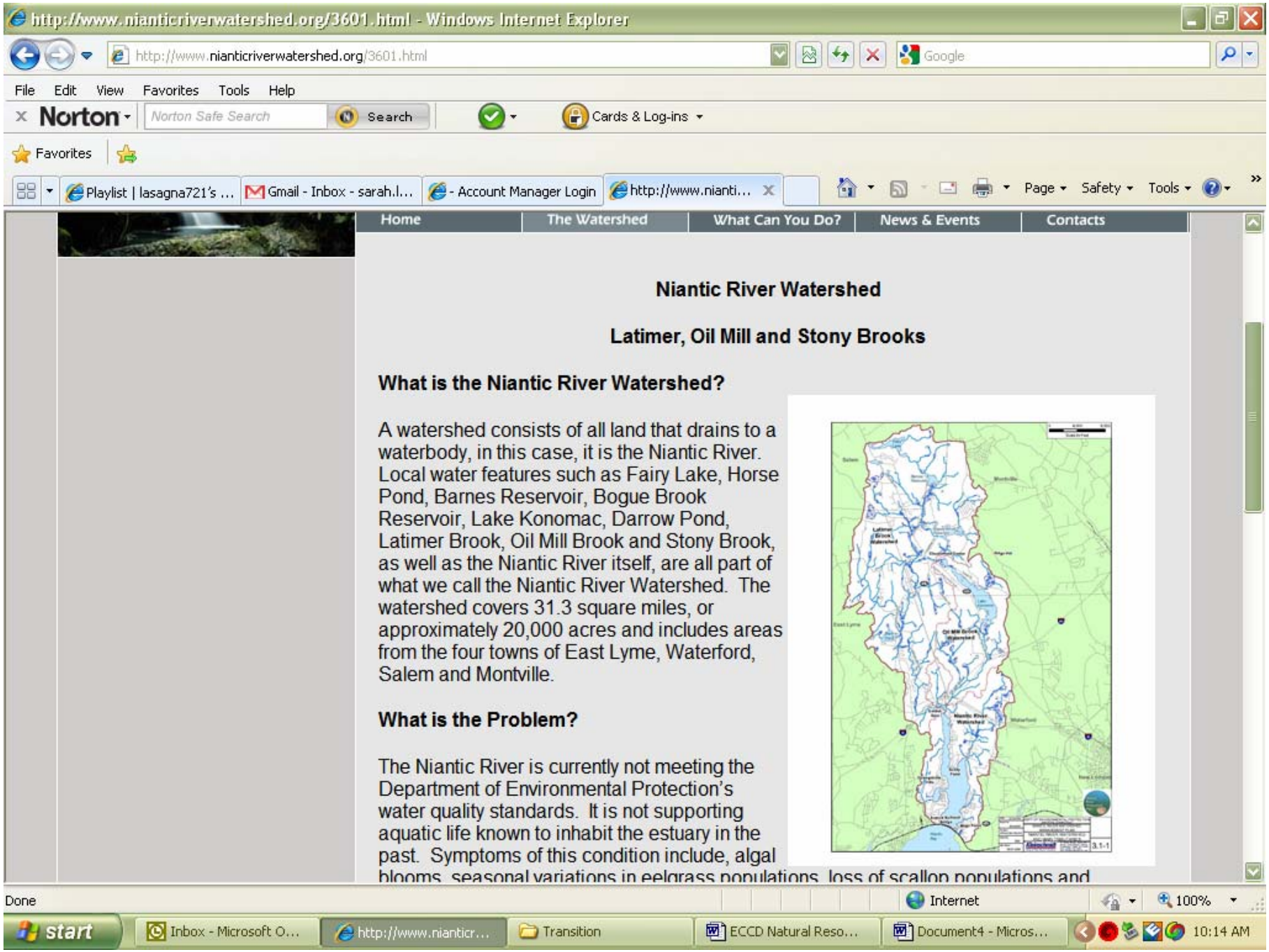

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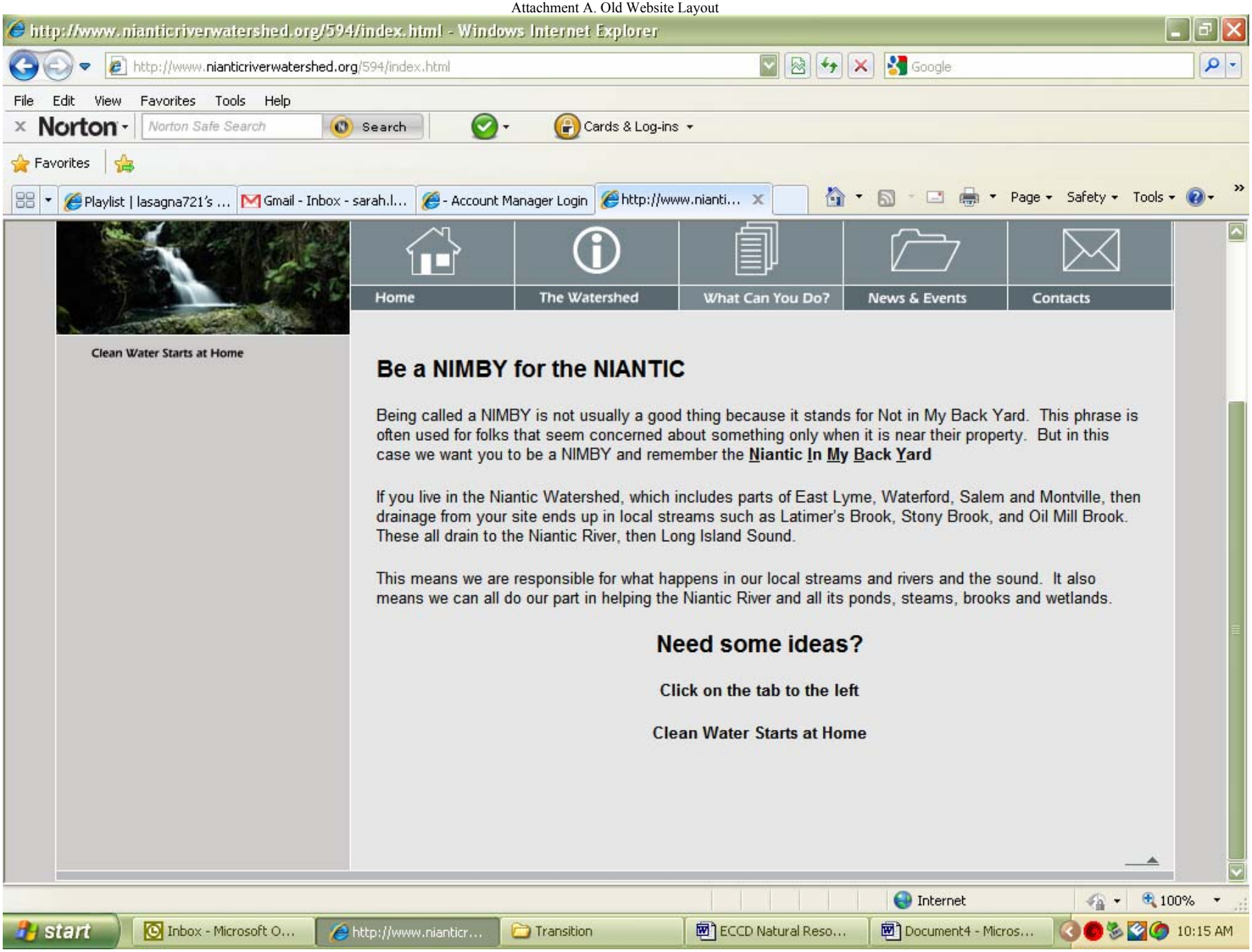

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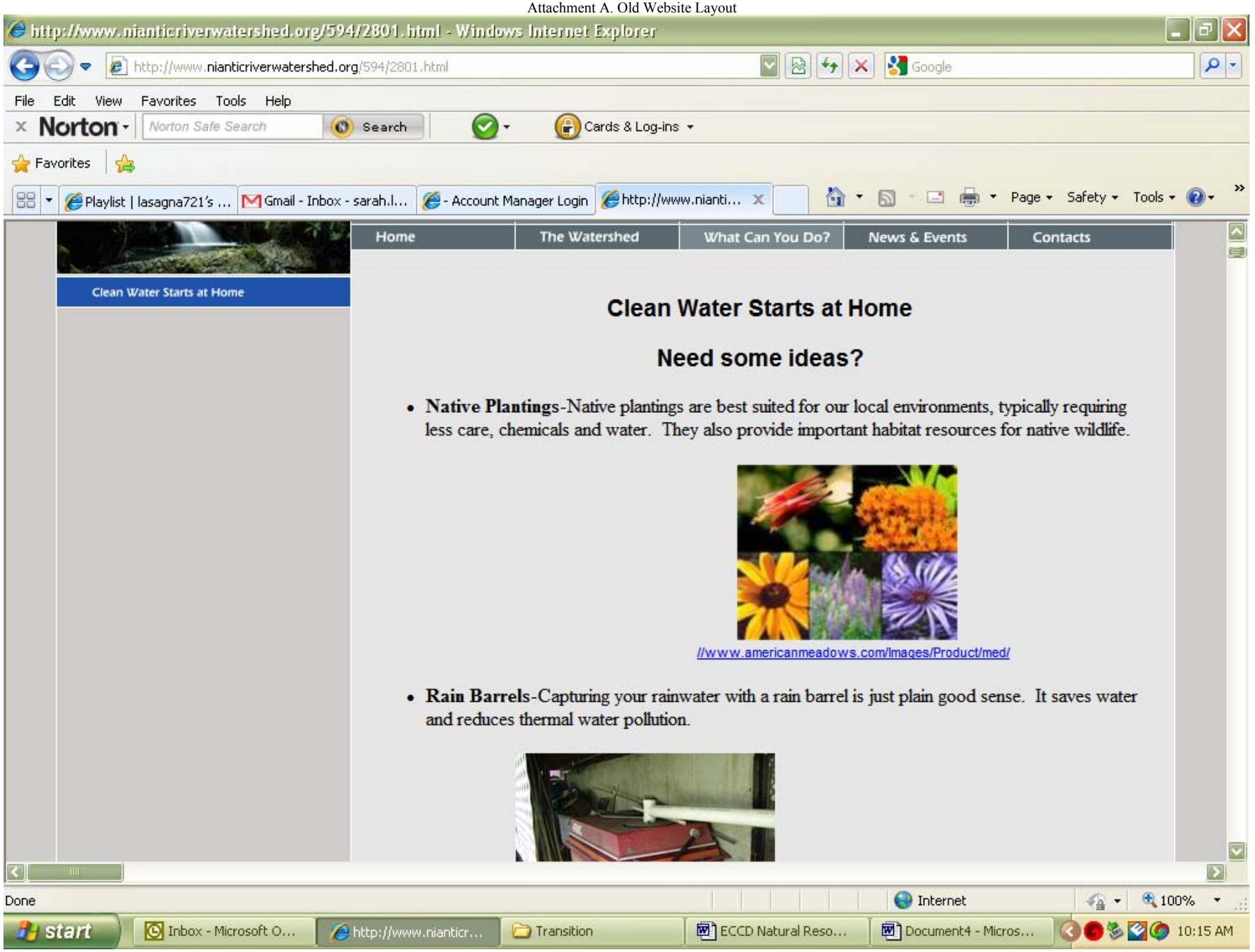
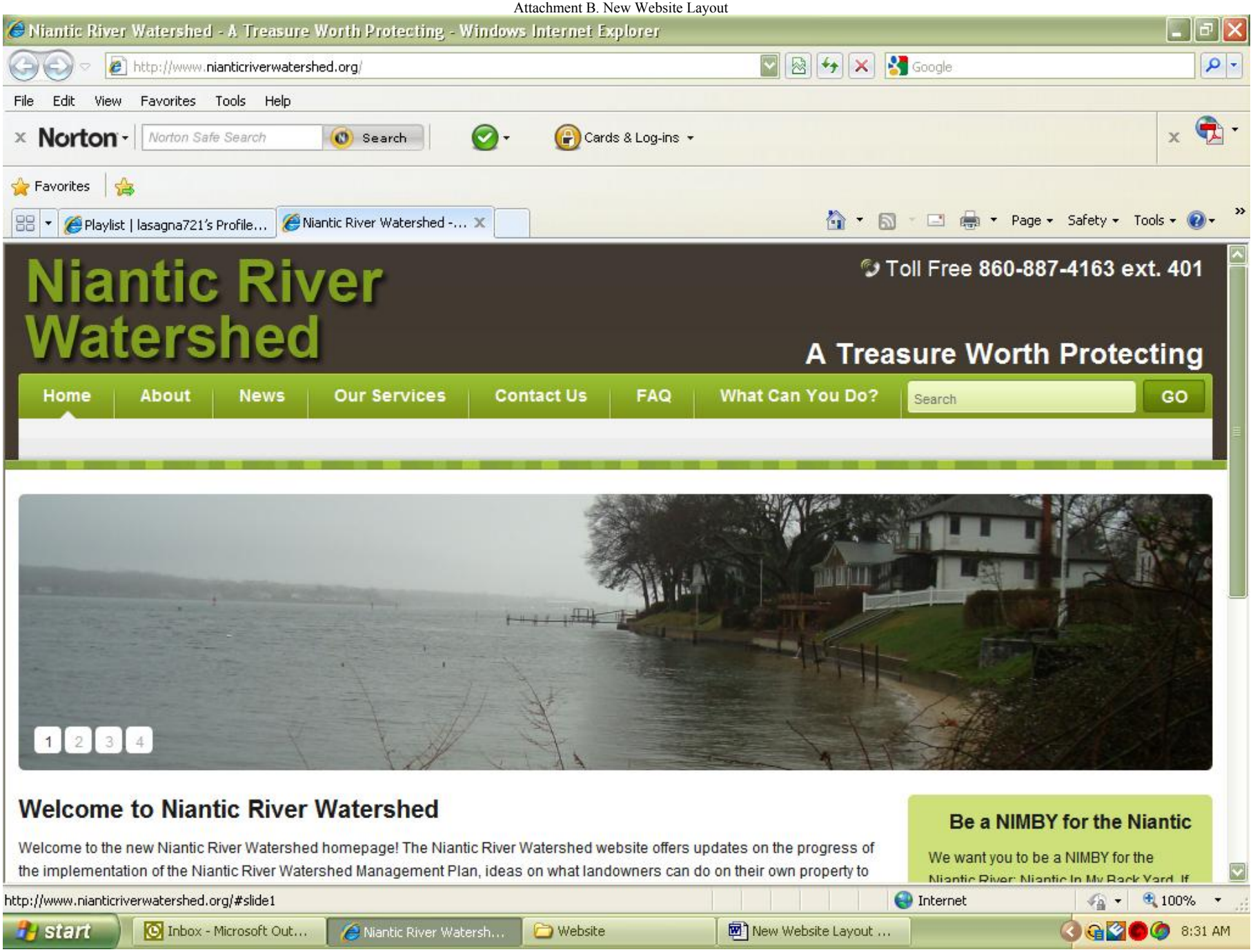


Attachment B. New Website Layout



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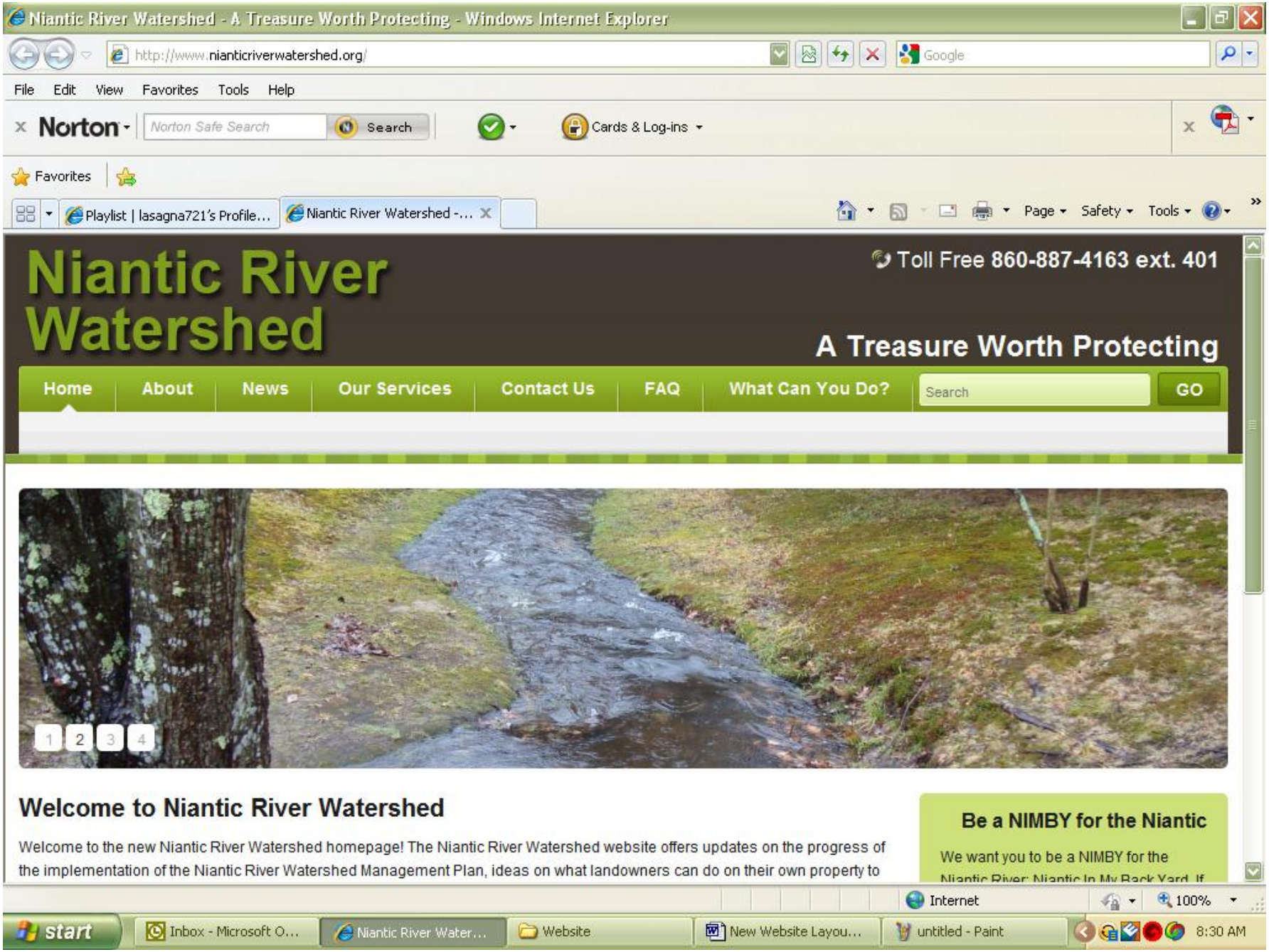

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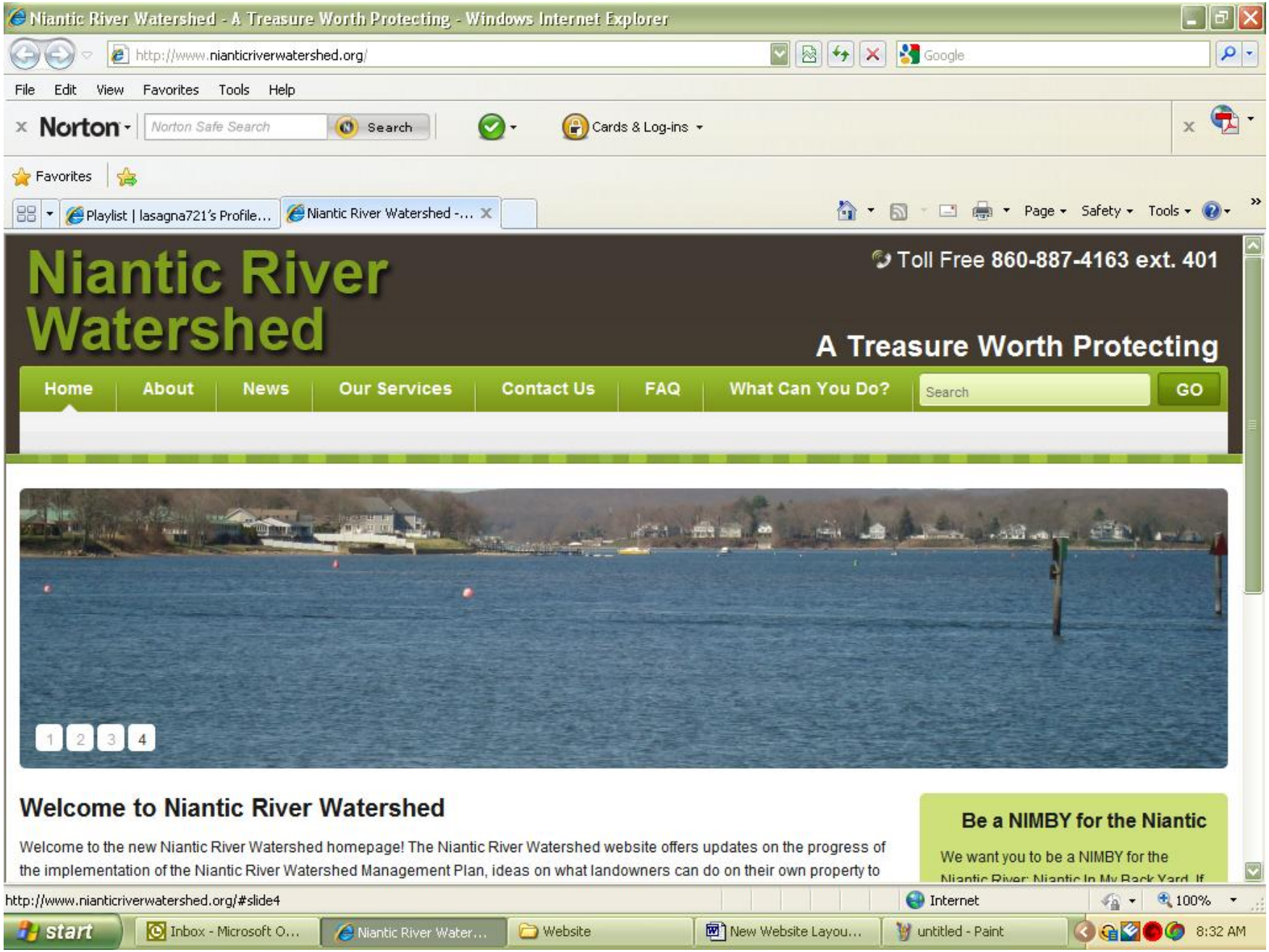
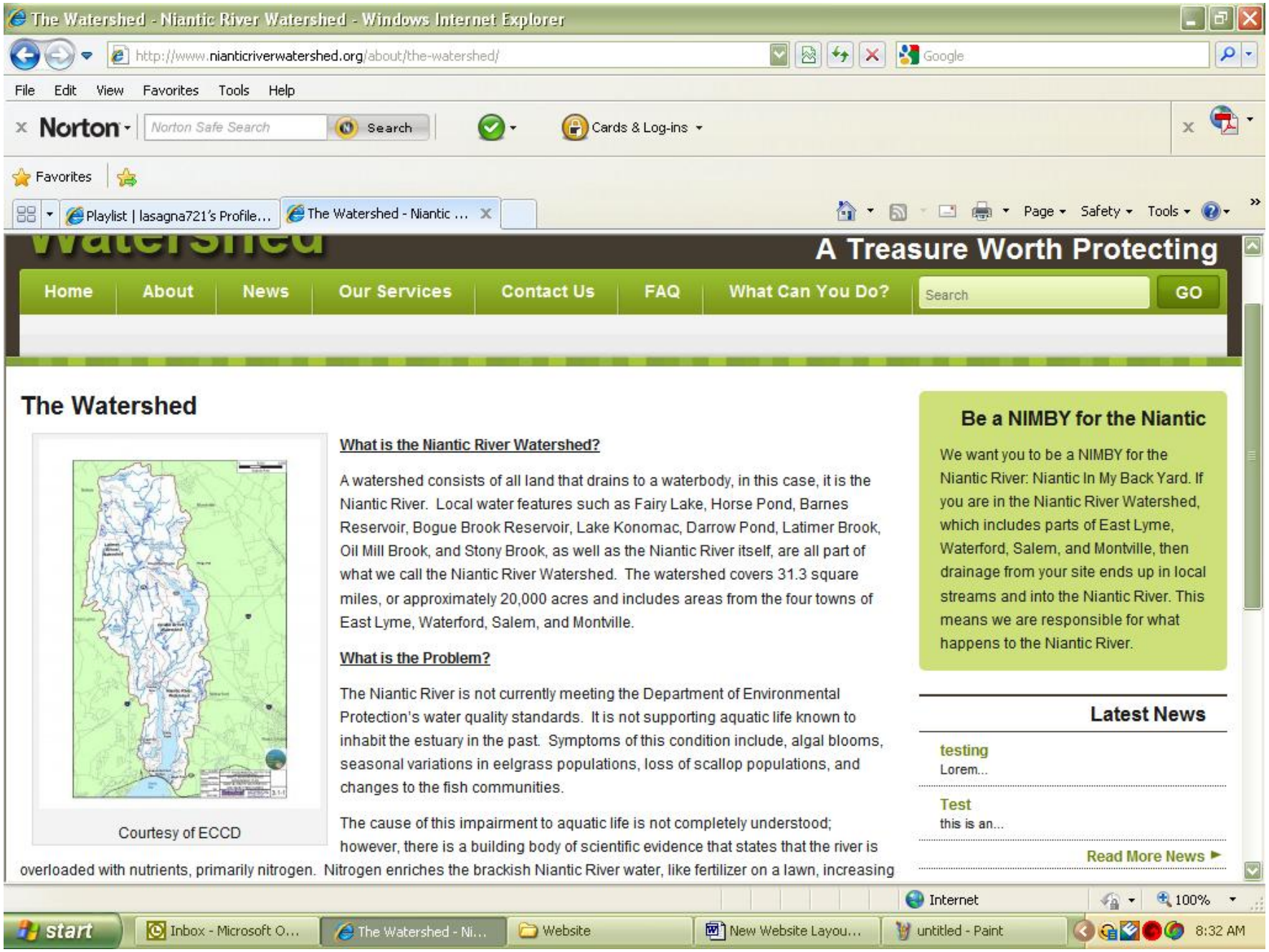
Attachment B. New Website Layout