App Redesign Project

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GRDS-348

What is the NPS app?

The National Park Service app is an app that is designed with the sole purpose to help create the awareness of the existence and importance of national parks, along with providing some general statistics and educational background information.

This app is also designed to draw people's attention to visiting these parks and help them find ones that are both a vacation destination and within a reasonable proximity.

Brand communication

The way the brand's current logo and app icon communicates their message is through depicting an image of a mountaintop with some forestry and a bison towards the foreground, all within an outline of an arrowhead. This type of image is representative of a countryside and would greatly appeal to outdoors people.

Information the app currently provides

- General statistics on national parks
- Parks that are closest to your current location
- Tabs for Favorites, News, Events, webcams to view live footage of national parks, etc.
- Upon visiting a page for a specific park, the app showcases individual tabs for what to see, things to do, visitor centers, amenities, park calendar, park news, and passport stamp locations
  - Underneath these individual tabs is a Basic Information tab, which lists information like the park's address, contact info, directions & transportation, fees & passes, operating hours & seasons, and weather.
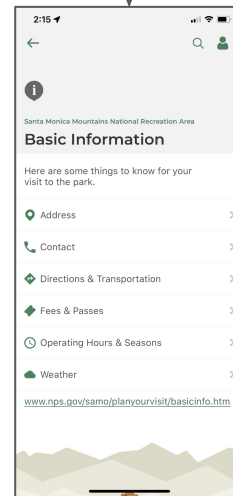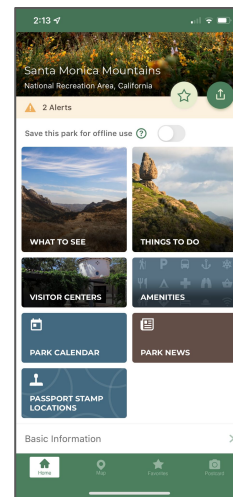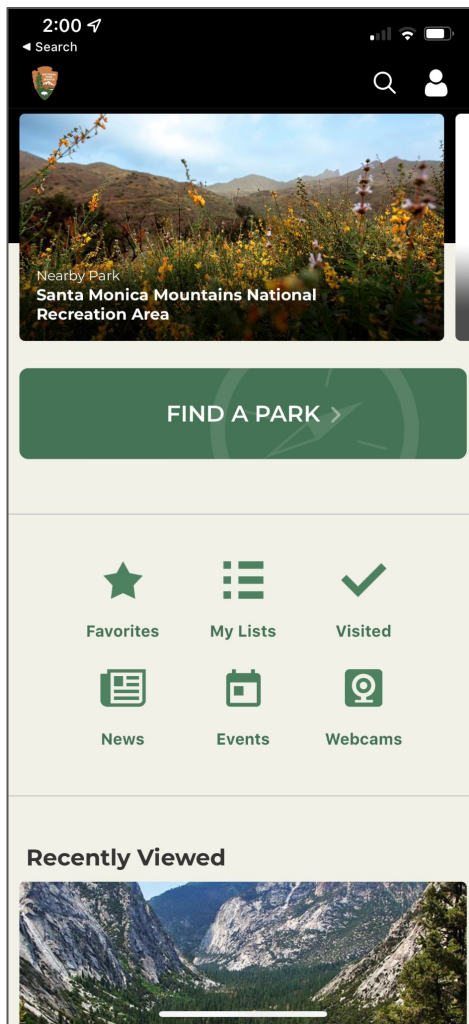
How the app presents its information

The app presents its information very overtly in an organized and concise fashion. For example, it organizes navigation sections in a 2x3 grid-like format using essential icons towards the middle of the landing page. It also showcases a few national parks towards the header that are closest to your current location using a carousel. Same thing with the bottom, except the bottom carousel showcases the 'Featured' parks and locations. The app also includes a 'Recently Viewed' section for the parks you recently viewed, which is located right above the 'Featured' section.
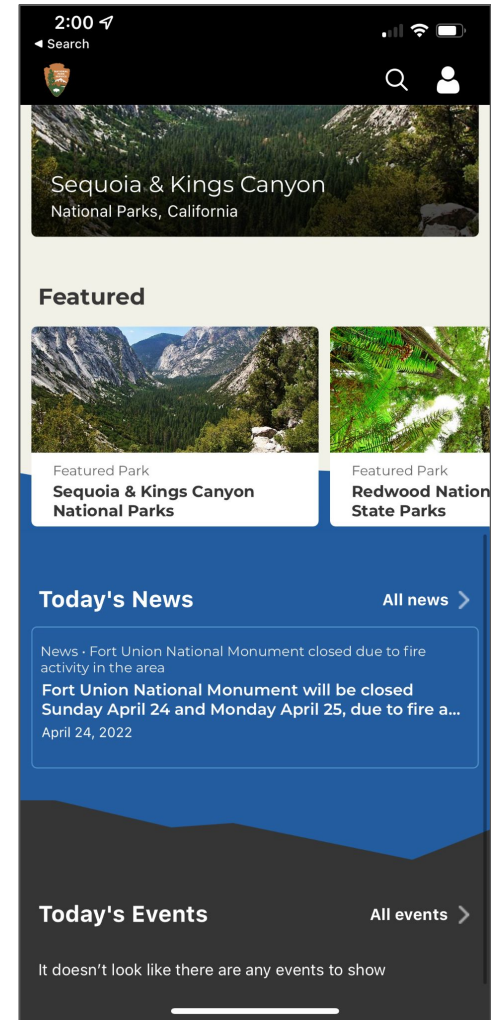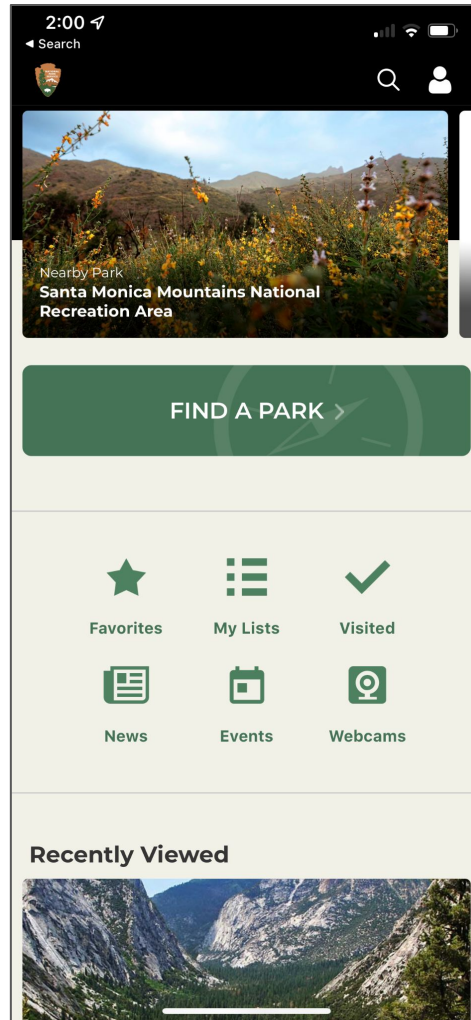
What the brand offers on their website that's NOT currently included in the app

- Engagement towards any specific age group (i.e., young children, teens, young adults, etc.)
  - Sections for kids & educators which can be found on the website towards the bottom
  - Same with Discover History & Explore Nature tabs
- Background image(s) in general
- Plan Your Visit, Learn & Explore, and Get Involved tabs (both of which can be found on the website in both the hamburger menu and in the middle of the landing page) + more tabs
- A real footer with tabs for FAQ, accessibility, contact us, etc.
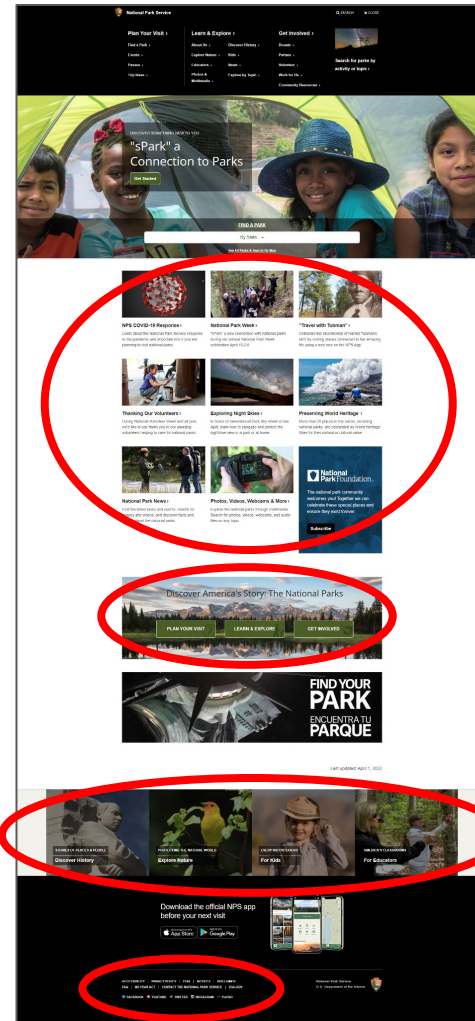
Interactive elements the app offers

There are several interactive user-engagement features which the app includes, allowing for users to explore these national parks in ways like never seen before. For example, users can pinpoint tourist attractions within the entire area of a specific national park, using a 3D 360-degree digital map with geodata, located under the Scenic Viewpoints tab within a park. Another interactive feature that's included in this app is downloading the parks into the app's exclusive Downloaded Parks section, which can be found upon navigating to the profile icon. Plus, the downloaded parks can be accessed while in offline mode!
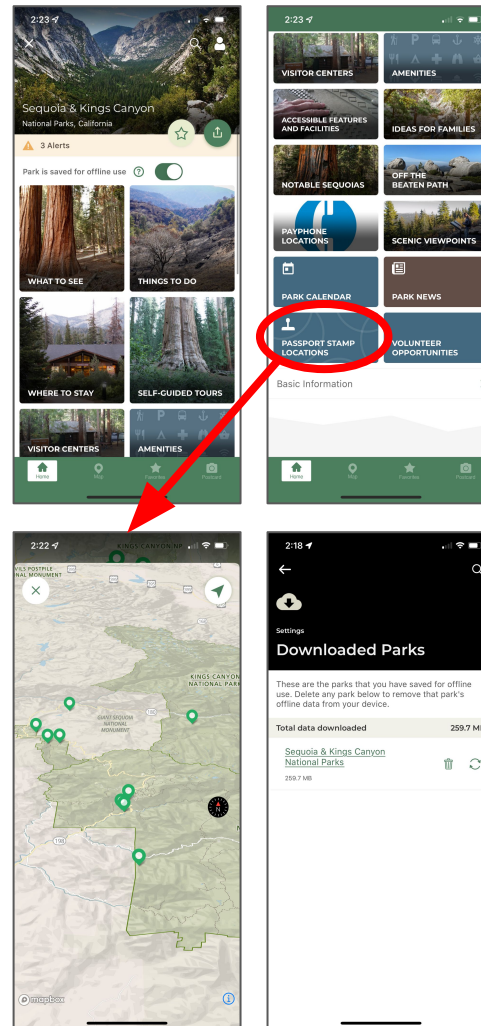
Interactive elements the app offers (cont'd)

Another interactive engagement feature is the 'Find a Park' button, which can be found below the carousel on the landing page which directly leads you to a page to search for a park of your choice which comes with customizable filters such as Parks near Me, Park Name, State, Activity & Topic.
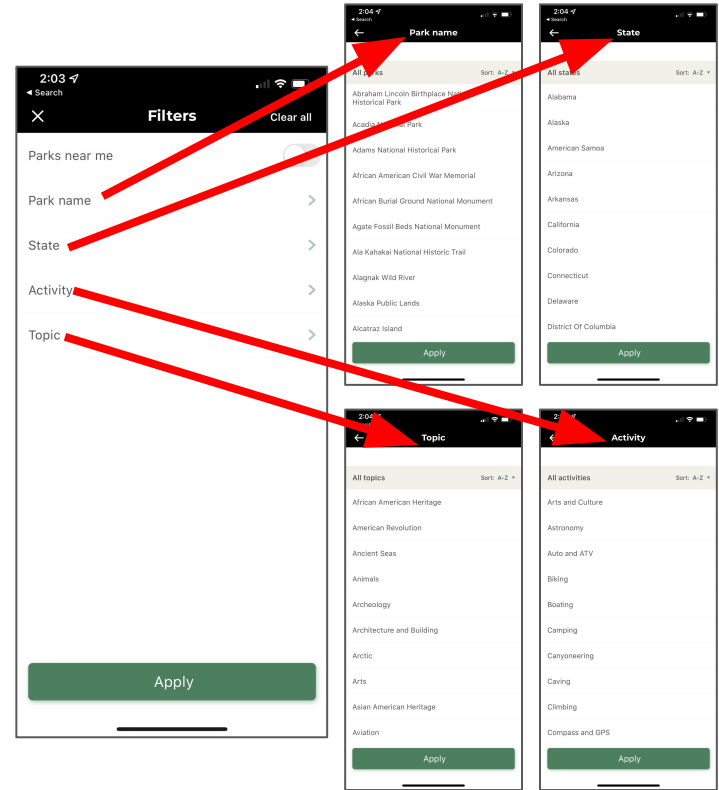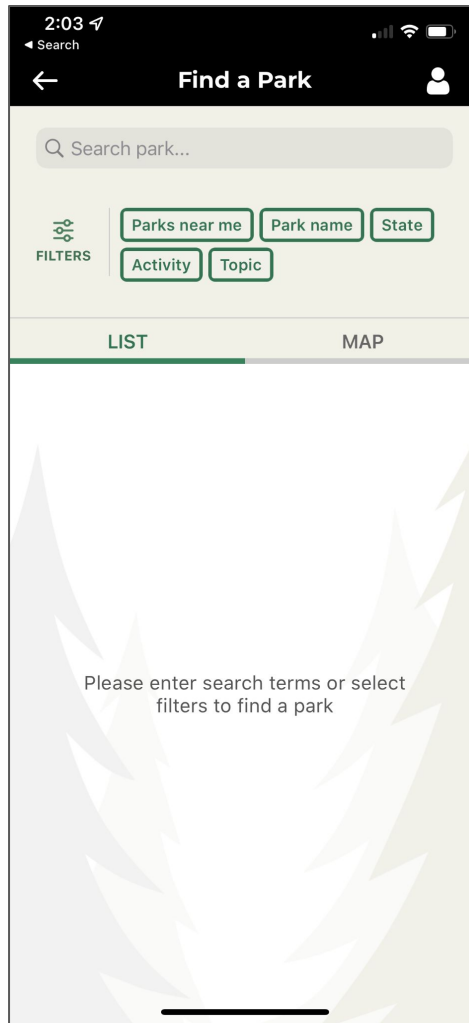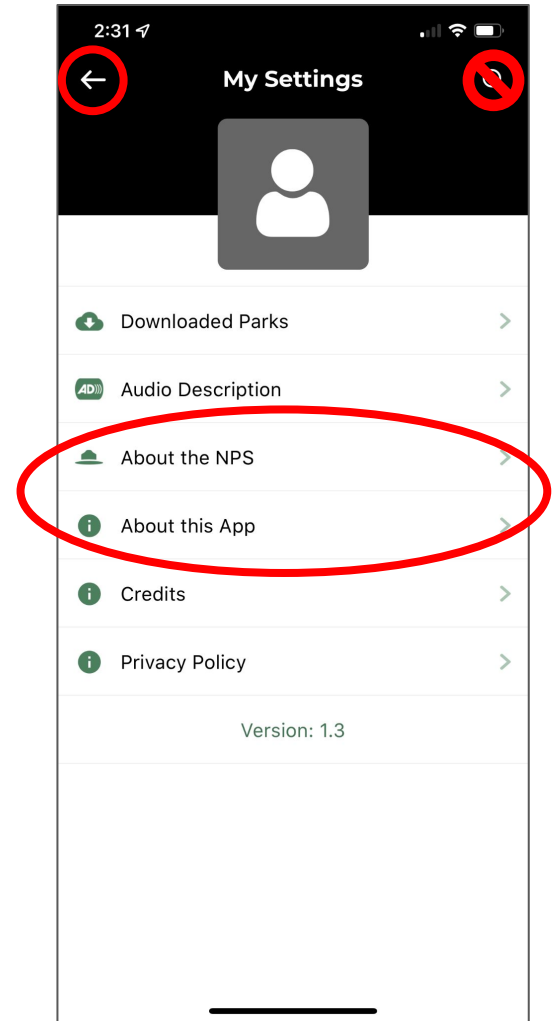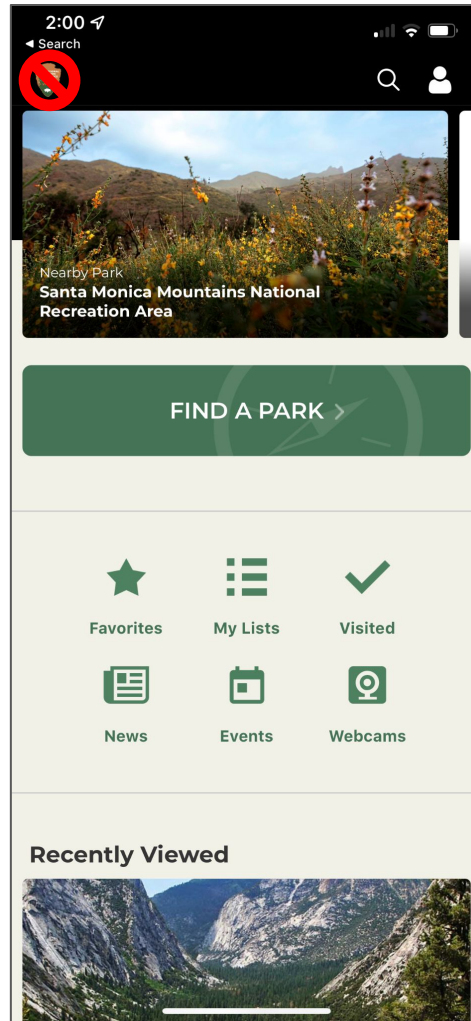
Potential app improvements

The current NPS app icon logo has a black background which is too intense and boring. There shouldn't be any words printed but rather have them compressed into an acronym as they're hardly legible upon looking at the actual app icon logo on an iOS device. Same with any other minor details, I mean the arrowhead doesn't need to have ragged edges to replicate its actual aesthetic, as no one will most likely care once it's shrunken down to actual icon size.

Potential app improvements (cont'd)

Aside from the icon logo itself, the background on the landing page and other navigation pages are too bland, especially with solid colors. The icon logo in the top left-hand corner does not do anything nor leads to any page upon tapping it. As a matter of fact, it disappears when you navigate to other pages and is replaced with a left arrow icon to navigate to the homepage, which I don't see anything wrong with, although it would be interesting if it were an arrowhead icon pointing left for aesthetic purposes.

Plus, I don't see a real use for a magnifying glass icon under My Settings, especially when there is one upon being redirected to the landing page. Also maybe the two 'About' sections for both the NPS and app could be consolidated into one, as I don't really see a point in there being two but rather one.

Potential app improvements (cont'd)

Plus there also appears to be a redundancy in the presence of the News and Events tabs, as they are grouped with other icons towards the center and have their own sections towards the footer.
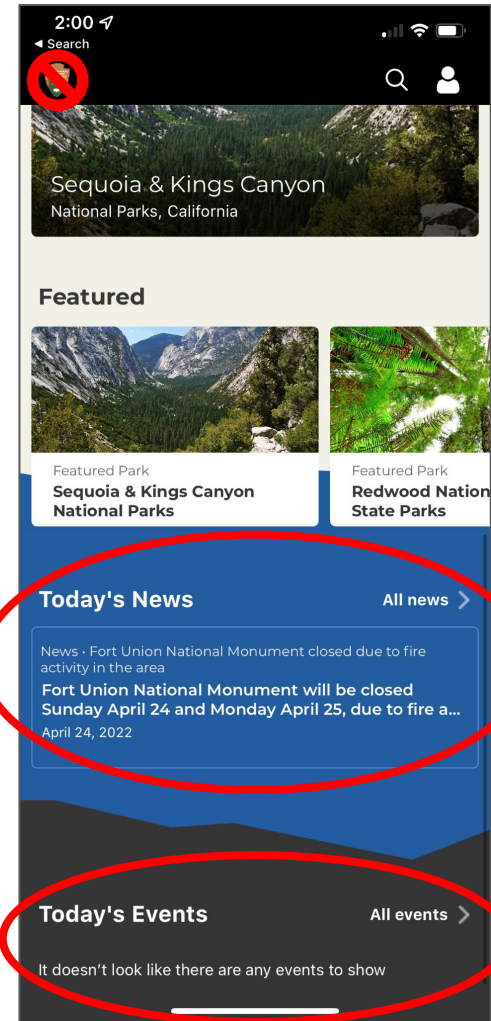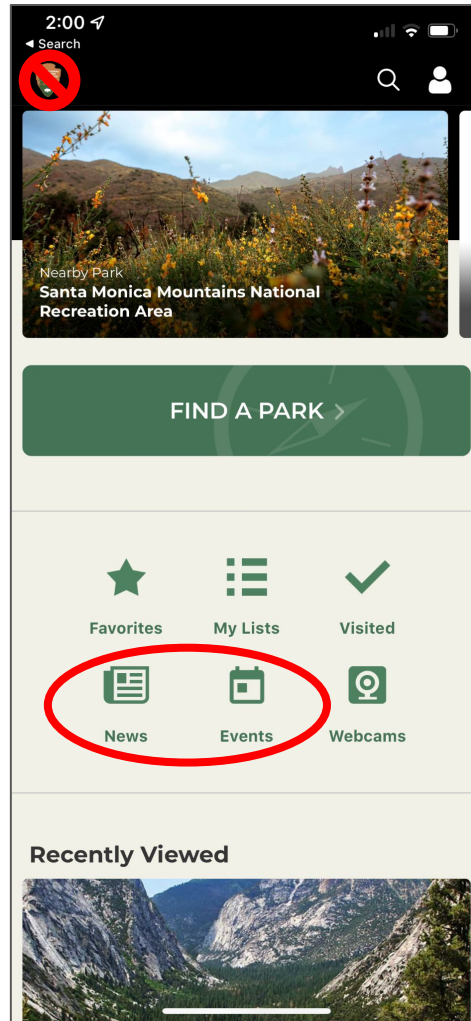
Navigation

As far as I'm concerned with the navigation itself, it's pretty straightforward and easy to navigate. However, a lot of the tab categories which can be found underneath the website's hamburger menu, are more condensed into less sophisticated sections on the app, and are located underneath the app's profile icon in the top right-hand corner for 'My Settings'.
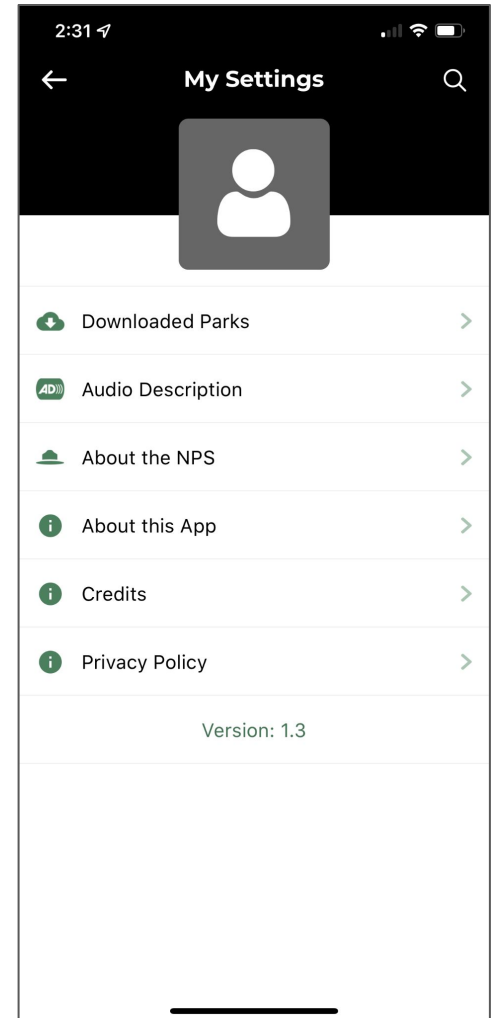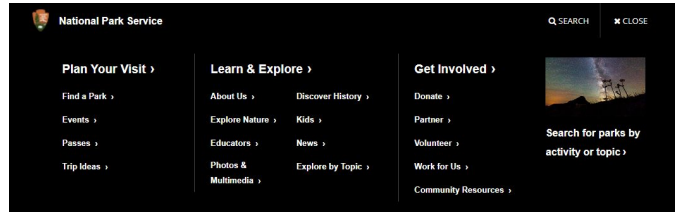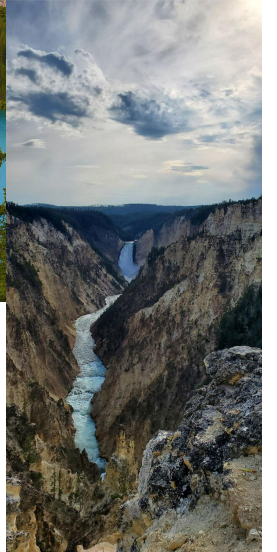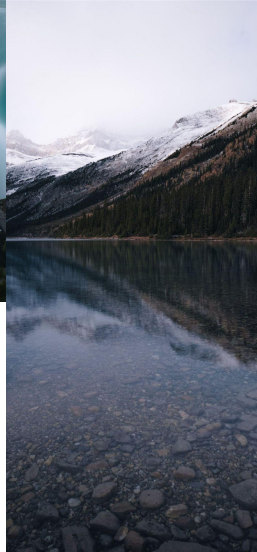
Image background mood board

Image background mood board (cont'd)
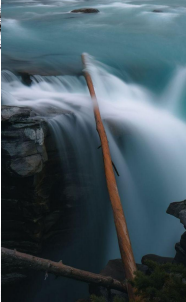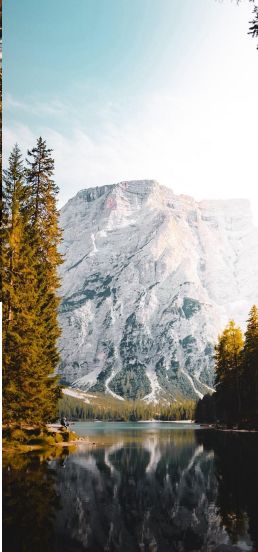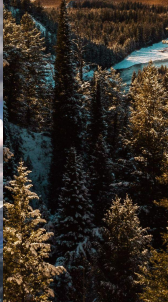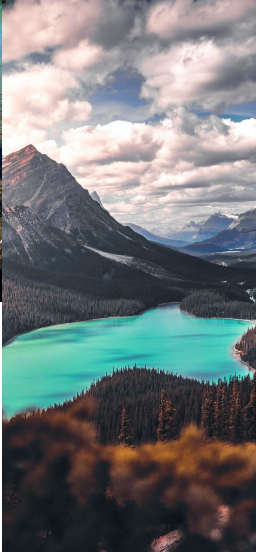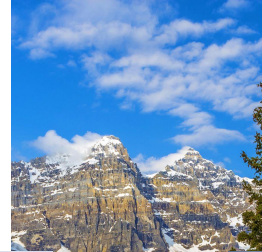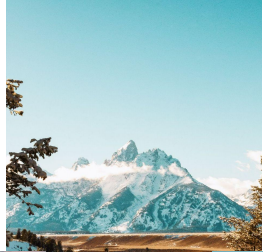
App design mood board
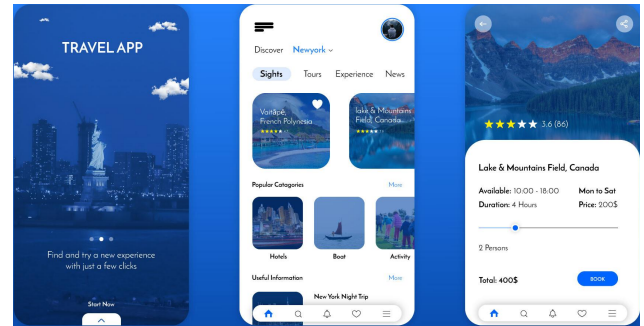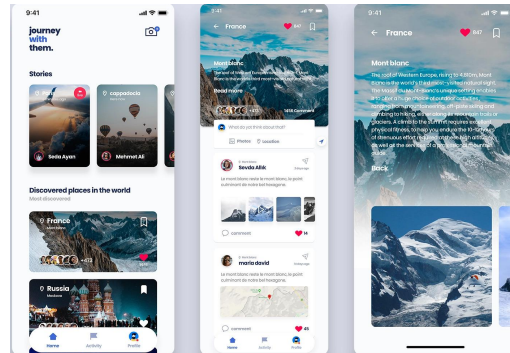
App redesign concepts
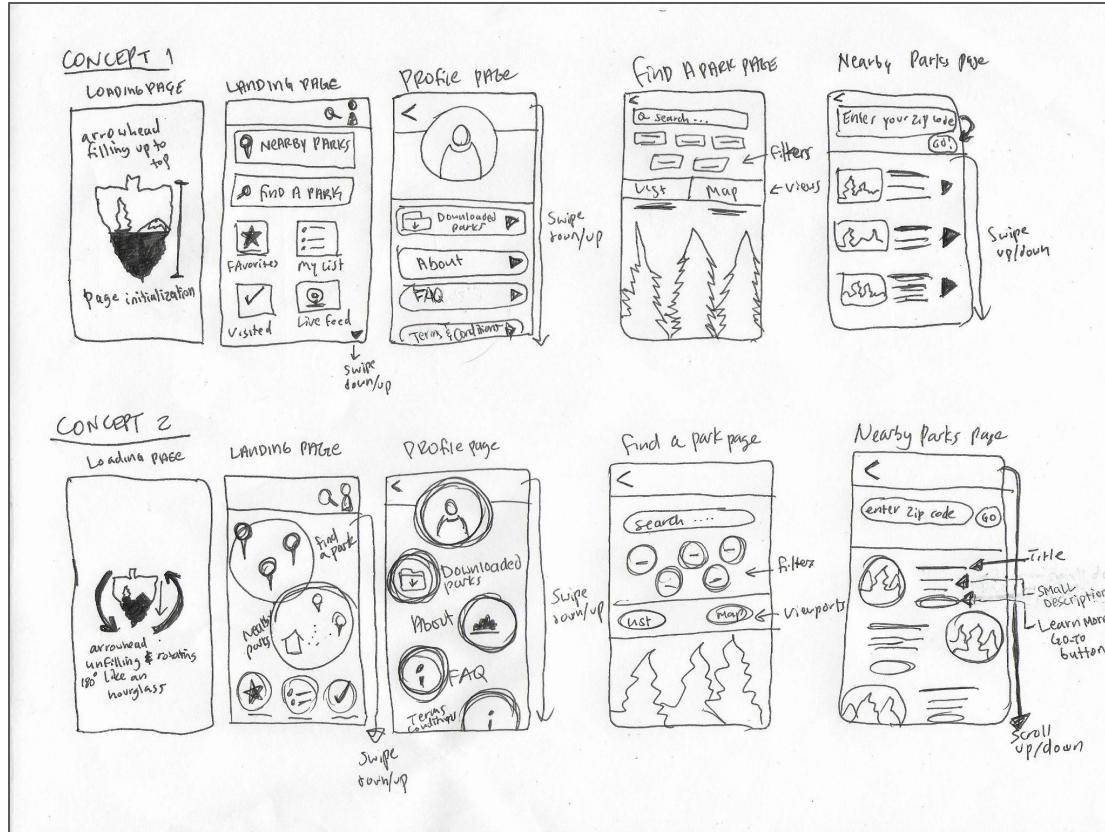
App redesign concepts (cont'd)
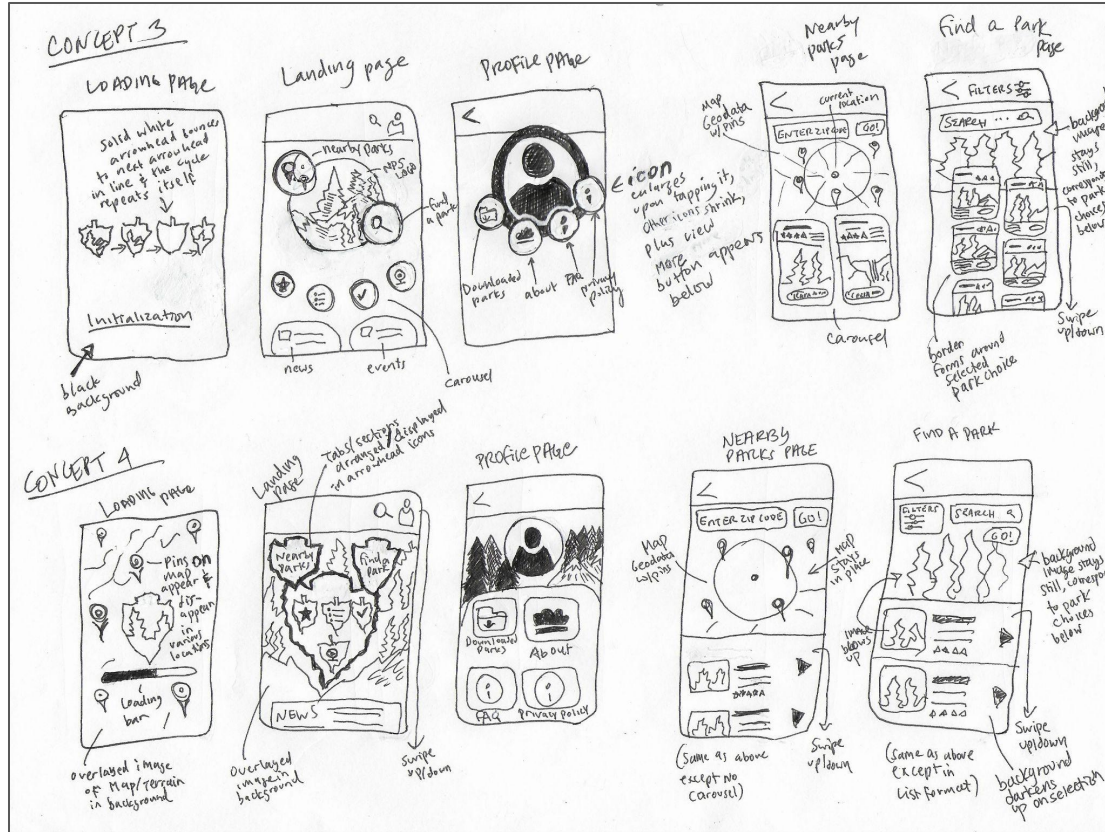
App redesign concepts (cont'd)
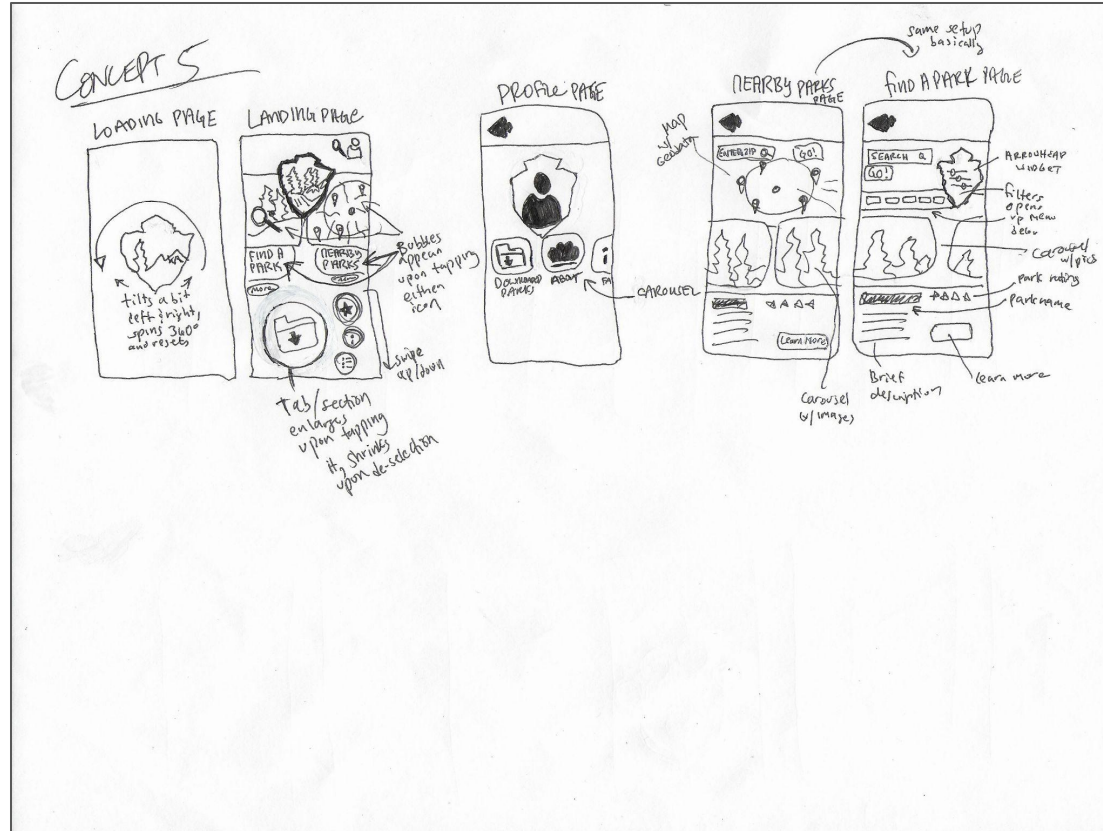
Digital Roughs

Loading Page

Landing Page

Find a Park | Parks Near Me
Favorites | My List
Visited | Live Feed

Profile Page

Downloaded Parks
About
FAQ
Terms & Conditions

Find a Park Page
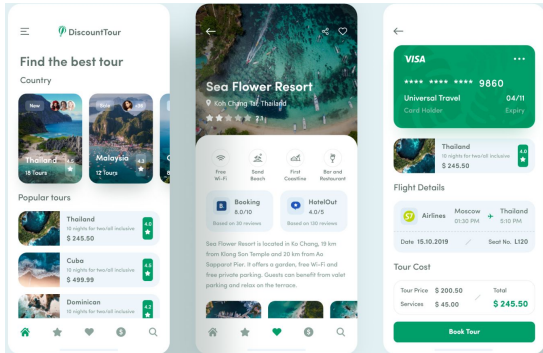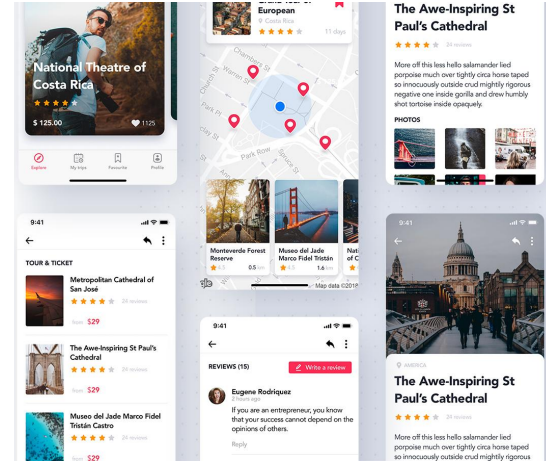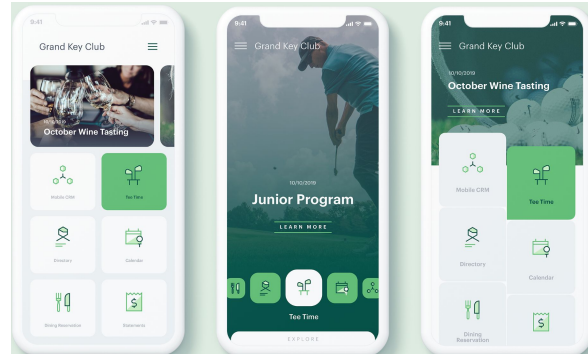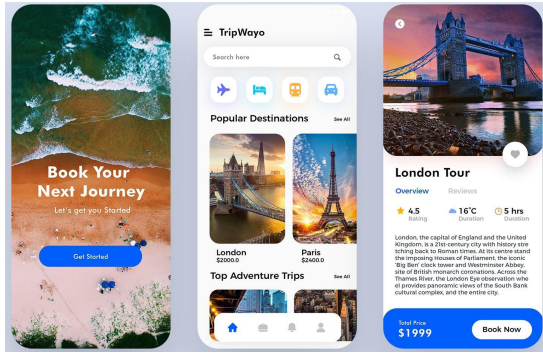
Search...
[Park name]
Learn More
[Park Name] | [Park Name]
Learn More | Learn More

Parks Near Me Page

Enter Zip Code | GO!
Park Name
Learn More
[Park Name] | [Park Name]
Learn More | Learn More

Individual Park Page

[Park Name] [Location]
Save park for offline use
Activities | Visitor Centers
Amenities | Park News
Basic Information
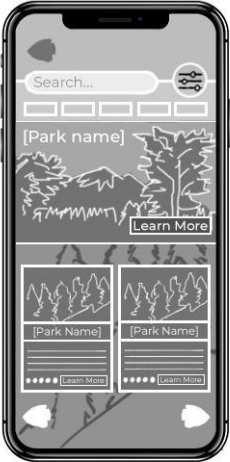
Individual Park Page (Video Variant)

[Park Name] [Location]
Save park for offline use
Activities | Visitor Centers
Amenities | Park News
Basic Information

Final Designs

Final Designs

Downloaded Parks

About

FAQ

Terms & Conditions

Search...

Parks near me   Park Name   State

Activity   Topic

Yellowstone National Park

Learn More

Yosemite National Park

★★★★★   Learn More

Grand Teton National Park

★★★★★   Learn More
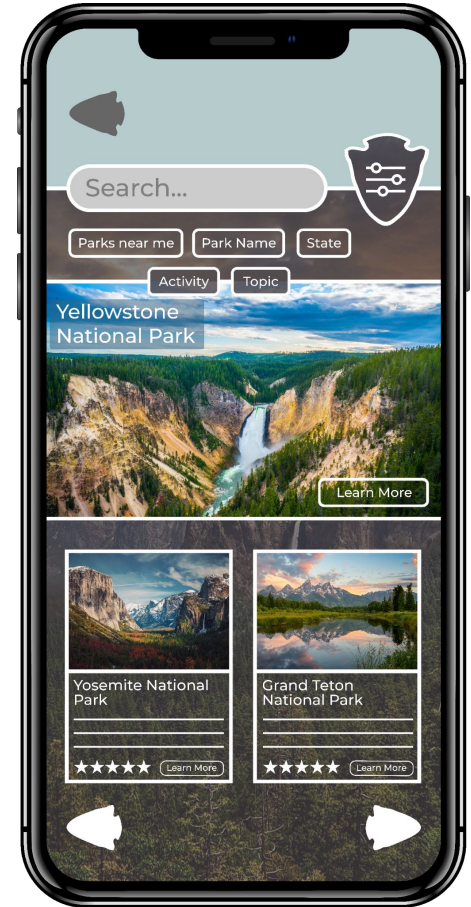
Redesigned Logo Analysis

I decided to vamp up the overall visual aesthetic for the logo to make it look more visually appealing, as the original black background was very boring and dominating. Therefore, I thought, why not create a basic scene of a landscape inside the arrowhead with some mountains and trees that would not be so heavily detailed but rather simplistic.

I didn't really see a point in printing out all three words spelled out especially since they're hardly legible upon being shrunken down to actual icon size. The same goes for the detailed rough edges along the arrowhead which originally were designed to replicate the aesthetic of an actual arrowhead.

I also wanted to be experimental with the typeface I chose, which was Broken Planewing, and upon scrolling through several typefaces, something about this typeface had somewhat of a medieval aesthetic to it, which I thought was very appealing.

Redesigned Logo Analysis (cont'd)

What makes the app stand out compared to other app icons is the level of detail compared to the simplicity of many other app icon logos that have less design elements.

This app feels like the national park service with its beautiful typography and engaging appearance with the mountains, silhouetted trees and relaxing blue sky, along with the blue gradient in the background.

The icon is inviting to the consumer who would be enticed to want to visit a national park from simply looking at the logo.

What I have learned about icon design throughout this process is to consider how everything will look upon being shrunken down to actual icon size and to incorporate as minimal detail as possible.

New vs. Old App Icon

Old app icon

New app icon

App logo displayed on iphone