

Castle Kayaks

What if you could make the process of booking a kayak easy and fun?



Castle Kayaks Smartphone App

UXDE-722 User Experience Design

Castle Kayaks App:

Key Problem:

Windsor Castle Park in Smithfield, Virginia offers kayak rentals by the hour and occasional kayak tours on the flat water of the Pagan Creek and the intertwining marshlands. The current process to reserve a kayak rental at Windsor Castle Park is inefficient and not straightforward, which hinders the use of kayaks, and does not encourage the use of park facilities or local businesses. The Castle Kayaks app can reserve kayaks and book special events based on calendar availability, while providing other fun and useful features.

Vision Statement:

To encourage users to explore Windsor Castle Park through kayaking with an easy-to-use, informative, and fun mobile app that guides users through the kayak rental process, from start to finish. To invite users to utilize park facilities and nearby attractions with an enjoyable, socially interactive interface that helps them feel they are part of a fun, nature-loving community.

What This Product Can Do:

- Incorporates weather conditions and forecast into booking functionality, so users can make informed decisions
- Shows upcoming events, such as guided kayak tours
- Provides address of park with link to GPS directions
- Shows kayaks availability in an easy-to-use calendar
- Provides mandatory waiver form
- Saves profiles with saved payment and event information
- Enables payment through PayPal or credit cards
- Sends email/text confirmation upon successful submission of kayak reservation
- Invite a friend to an event
- Provides safety instructions and tips as well as information about wildlife native to the area
- Enables photo taking from a kayak, with big buttons, high contrast, and simple interface
- Stabilizes images to enable sharp photos
- Records geolocation of shared photos, adds image/tag to pinpoint on map, which can be viewed by other app users
- Rental clock timer- starts on the hour that's reserved and counts down- uses big easy-to-read numbers
- Alert users 15 minutes prior to rental return
- Upon rental return, encourages users to share images with friends on social media- Facebook, Instagram, and/or Shapchat
- Shows nearby attractions and restaurants on same map where photos can be tagged. Can show each category via layers on the map.

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Target Users:

- 25 – 45, male & female
- Nature lovers
- Those who are fit with an active lifestyle
- Photography buffs
- Locals in the Smithfield, VA area & nearby visitors from within a 1 hour radius
- Environmentally conscious
- "Weekend Warriors"- People who have limited time, but have desire to get outside on weekends
- Tech savvy- used to many other useful, modern apps that make booking/ordering/shopping efficient
- Fun-loving, smart, curious, creative
- Active on Social Media
- Community-oriented

"It is up to you to see the beauty of everyday things"

"YOLO" – You Only Live Once



Business Objectives:

- To increase awareness about Windsor Castle Park facilities, particularly the world-class kayak launch
- To lure Hampton Roads tourists, such as those visiting Virginia Beach or Colonial Williamsburg, to the town of Smithfield, including Windsor Castle Park
- To encourage user downloads of Castle Kayaks phone app
- To increase first-time kayak rental sales by 50%
- To increase return customer kayak rental sales by 50%
- To increase kayak rental revenue by 50%

UX Goals:

- To make it easy, efficient, and fun to book a kayak rental or reserve a spot at a special event kayak tour
- To inform users about attractions, such as historic sites, and restaurants that are near the park, so that users can make Smithfield an enjoyable destination and learn about the area
- To add useful and fun functionality such as photo sharing, a timer countdown, a live map, and weather conditions
- To increase safety by providing safety tips and instruction and an easy way to contact the facility if there's a problem

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Competitive Analysis

1 Current weather report is useful functionality

2 Inviting welcome screen- nice photography attracts the photogs

- Clear, handy options- Events, Social Media
- Understandable icons

3 Social media sharing options, attractive, interactive, clean interface

4 Has an inviting welcome screen, again, with a nice photograph

- Good options laid out in nice interface: Log In option, Classes, Settings, etc.
- Unclear difference between Enrollments, Appointments, and Buy Services
- The icons used are also unclear

5 Very useful functionality- share photos of points of interest and add them to map, based on your geographic location

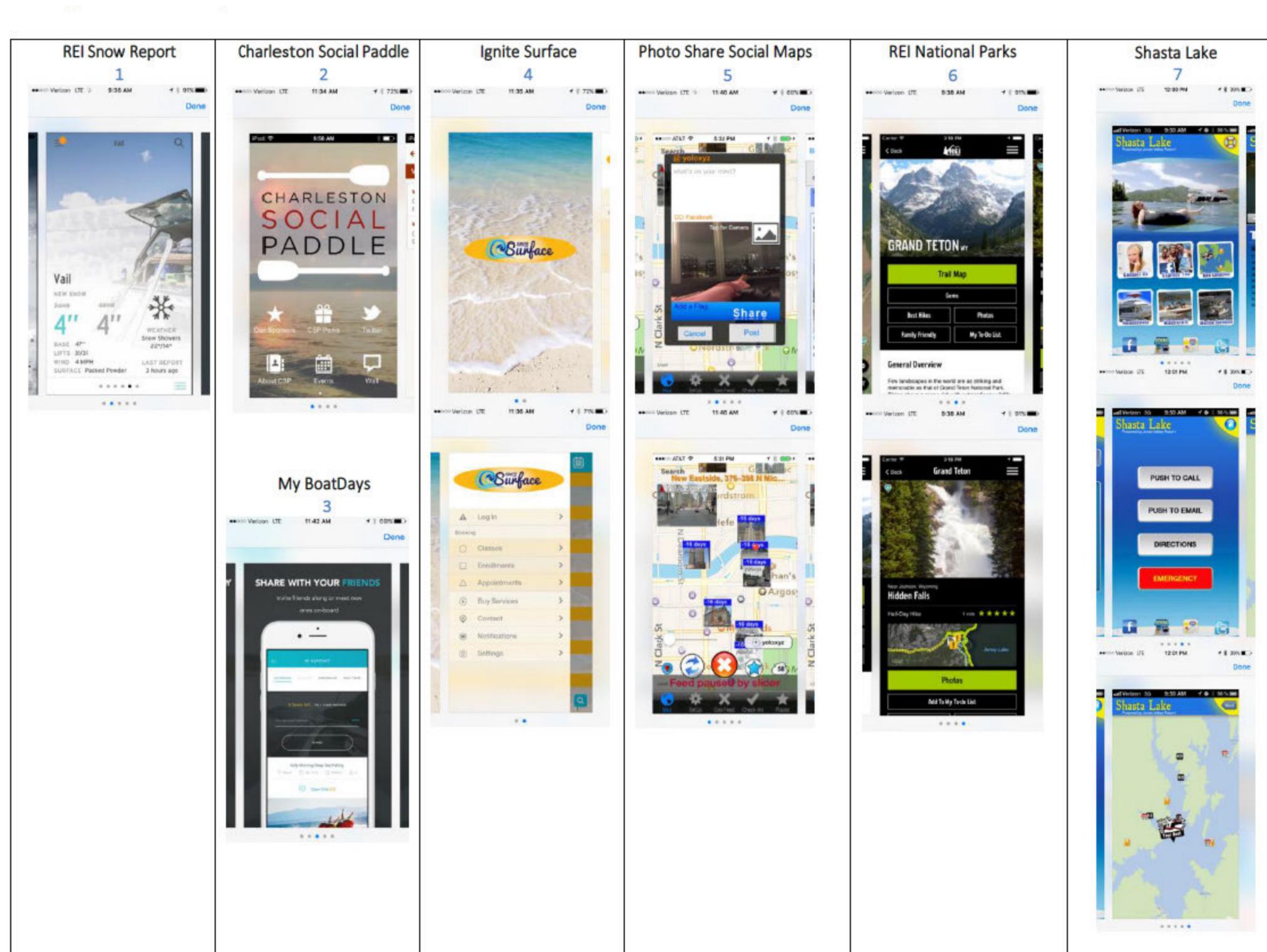
- View photos added by others to map
- Share photos via Twitter and Facebook
- Interface is messy, cluttered, and unattractive

6 Combines a lot of useful information in a clean interface, including maps, photos, to-do list

- I'm not sure what happens when you get to Gems or Family Friendly, though

7 Pinpoints location of your kayak, shows other attractions/utilities on map relative to where you are

- Good options on the welcome page
- Big, simple buttons for ease-of-use while on the water
- Emergency button is interesting functionality
- Emergency button could be hit accidentally, especially while on the water, trying to use phone through a pouch



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Brands of Interest

1 Photo taking and sharing- mostly users in their teens-early 40s

- Easy to share photos
- Ability to indicate which photos you like

2 Share posts, links, photos with friends/family- all ages from teens to senior citizens

- Share all kinds of content, from individual writing, links, news stories, photos, quizzes, games, etc.
- Ability to like comments, posts, photos, etc.
- Too much can be shared online- potential lack of privacy

3 Quickly order a ride from a driver, in many metropolitan areas, stores payment profile for rides- mostly 20s-40s

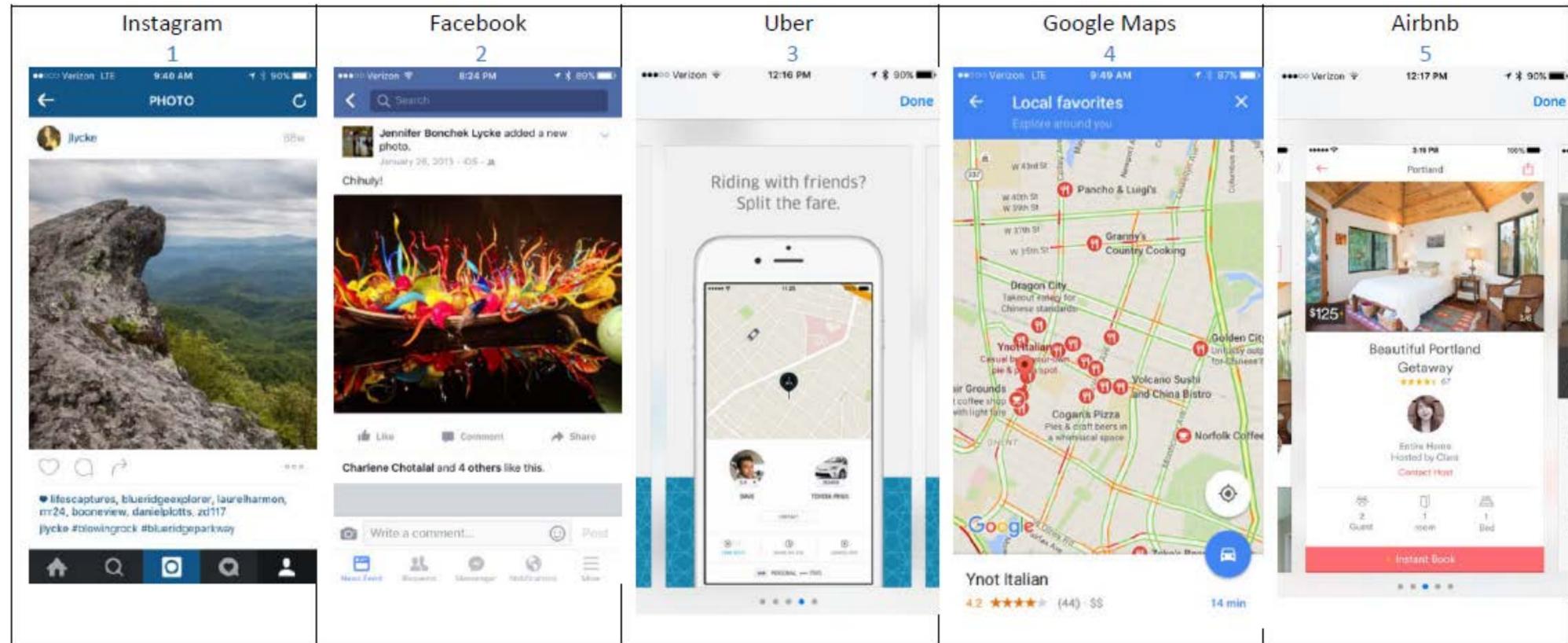
- Payment method is stored so that riders do not need to pay driver, fumble with money, deal with public transportation, hail cab
- Very efficient
- Estimated price is given upfront
- Still need to deal with traffic
- Uncertainty involved, due to not knowing the driver

4 In addition to the GPS/navigation capabilities, it stores attractions, points of interest, user photos in geotagged locations on map- spans many ages

- Very helpful to show what restaurants and points of interest are nearby, enabling you to then navigate there
- Great way to share photos and show what specific areas, such as parks, attractions, look like
- Way to find hidden gems for photography or travel

5 Can reserve rooms, houses, apartments, etc from regular people instead of using traditional hotel or rental company- mostly 20s-40s

- Can find unusual, personal, memorable places to stay, outside of cookie-cutter hotels
- Some options may be cheaper than traditional options
- Uncertainty and potential safety concerns



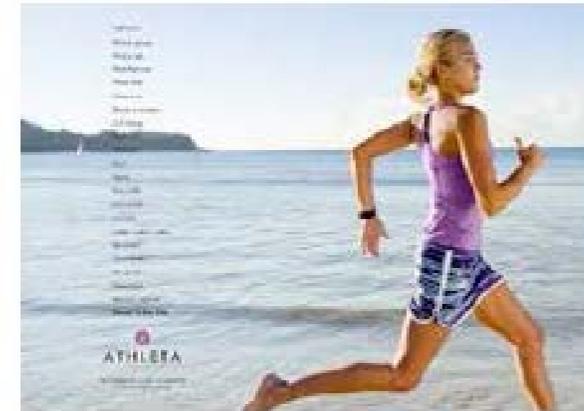
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- Dealing with international payments can be a hassle

Design Direction1: Adventurous Icons

- Thumbnail graphics show various options to navigate through with photo backdrop. Thumbnails take center stage.
- Thumbnails/buttons are large, easy to tap, and easy to distinguish whether using indoors or outdoors (usability)
- Provides gateway to the main functionality of app
- Large, clear weather conditions are useful for those booking a kayak in near future, or those who are about to go out on their kayak rental
- Photo backdrop provides outdoorsy feel which engages those who love nature and photography. Reminds users of why they're using this (to get outdoors, commune with nature and/or take great photos)
- Fun, contemporary icons are easy to read (usability) and add contemporary hip flair to the design, to appeal to the target users
- Opportunity to use various imagery that engages outdoorsy users with active lifestyle and/or nature lovers
- Fits in with current trends in web design

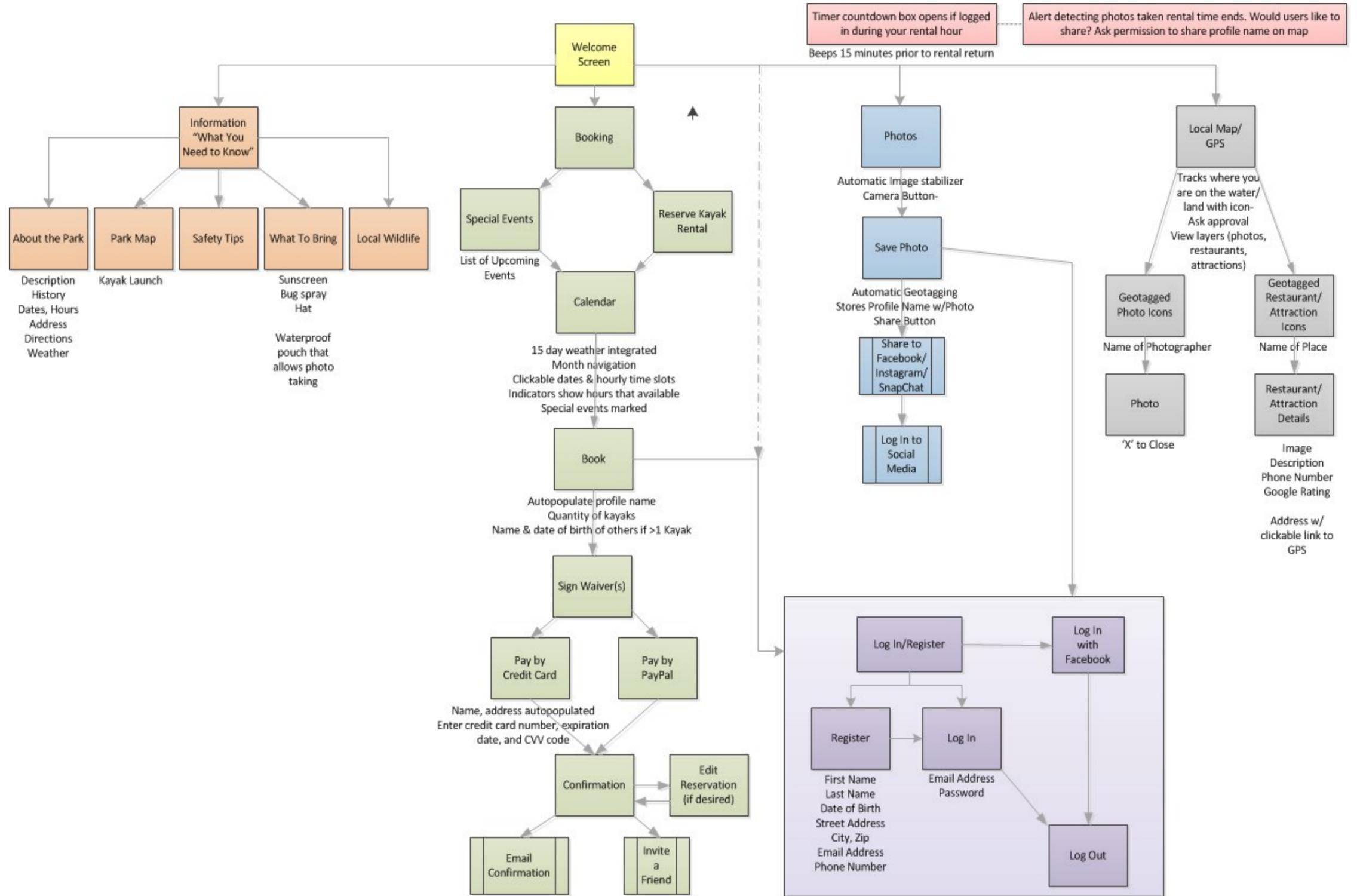


Minimalist
Bright
Crisp
Hip
Adventure
Grid
Square
Athletic

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Different colors show the various functional sections of the app



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Features can be organized into whether they are primarily used before booking a kayak, while out on the kayak, and after renting the kayak

App features:	
Booking	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Invite a friend functionality▪ Provide weather forecast▪ Shows upcoming events, such as guided kayak tours▪ Shows address of park with link to GPS directions▪ Shows when there are no kayaks available on an hourly basis, in calendar format▪ Calendar format integrates weather forecast information (icons of temp, sun, rain, etc) for the next 15 days▪ Provides mandatory waiver form with agreement to rental terms and conditions checkbox▪ Can create profile with saved credit card/payment information▪ Can choose to use existing PayPal account instead of adding credit card information▪ Sends email/text confirmation upon successful submission of kayak reservation▪ Provides safety instructions and tips
Guidance during paddle	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Provides current weather conditions▪ Information about wildlife native to the area, with photos and descriptions▪ Easily take pictures from a kayak of scenery and/or wildlife▪ Big buttons, simple interface, to enable photography while on a kayak, taken through a waterproof pouch▪ Image stabilizer, since on a kayak, to enable sharp images▪ Automatically records geolocation▪ Adds image/tag to pinpoint on map, which can be viewed by other app users▪ Rental clock timer- starts on the hour that's reserved and counts down- uses big easy-to-read numbers▪ Make alert sound 15 minutes prior to rental return
Guidance after paddle	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Option to share images with friends on social media- Facebook, Instagram, and/or Shapchat▪ Shows nearby attractions and restaurants on same map where photos can be tagged. Can show each category via layers on the map.

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Shawn "YOLO" – You Only Live Once

Job title:	Technical Writer
Industry:	Government
Company:	Northrop Grumman Works for large corporation- on a strict security Naval base on daily basis
Home Tech Use:	Use his Android phone and Samsung tablet for surfing the web. His wife does most of the online shopping and bill paying, but he will order a product through Amazon sometimes, and will order tickets to events like local festivals or concerts, or book dinner reservations online, thru apps like Open Table. His wife and he share a PayPal account. He occasionally sells used items on Ebay, to make more space in their small house, and to save a little extra money for their future home. Both he and his wife carry their smartphones wherever they go. He uses Facebook often to catch up with friends and family.

Male, outdoorsy, nature lover
38 years old, Gen-X, lives in Smithfield, VA, grew up in Smithfield area
Has a wife, Lauren, and a daughter who doesn't live at home
Homeowner- small 2 bedroom home near downtown

User Scenario

1. Shawn looks at the weather forecast for next Saturday. 2. The forecast looks great, so he wants to reserve a kayak before they're all taken. 3. He checks availability, and there's availability between 2-4 pm. 4. He double-checks his schedule, then books kayak and pays via PayPal account. 5. He signs the mandatory waiver. 6. Shawn shows up on Saturday (he already knows where to go) with his phone in a pouch. 7. He picks up, launches kayak, and takes pictures of blue herons. 8. The pictures automatically geotag on app map. 9. He shares a picture on Facebook. 10. He uses the app timer to know when he has to return. 11. He returns kayak and proceeds home. His wife called and she has a home project for him to start.

His job is boring and tedious to him, but it helps pay the bills, including his small house. He'd like to upgrade to a larger house located on waterfront (river, lake, wetlands, creek, etc) when he and his wife are in their 40s. Loves getting to the water whenever he can. He uses Internet, Office, SharePoint, and Project for work. He doesn't have a government phone, so only uses a desktop computer for work.

Hobbies and Interests

- Loves the outdoors: camping, hiking, biking, swimming, and kayaking
- Likes brands such as Whole Foods, REI, NorthFace, and Bass Pro

Environment/Context

- Has hiked on the park trails regularly since the park's opening 5 years ago
- Brings smartphone everywhere
- Has a water protective pouch for bringing phone with him on kayak
- Commonly takes photos on his smartphone while hiking/biking, of humorous things, and of family, etc.

Motivations

- Goes to the park on weekends to get away from and forget about desk job
- Feel a part of the larger community
- Helps him get out into nature, to see scenery, birds, turtles, etc.

Goals

- Increase environmental awareness in others
- Be active and get out into nature
- Have some quiet time

Frustrations

- Being too sedentary over the workweek
- Wishes he could get out in nature more
- Others' lack of environmental awareness
- Lack of time outside work and home maintenance

Experience Expectations * (See apps that Shawn uses)

- Usability:** Likes ease-of-use, efficiency, social sharing, fun apps
- Learn and share more about the park and about the local wildlife
- Wants simple interface, big buttons, big high-contrast text to press options and see while out in sunshine on an unsteady boat
- Wants to take a steady sharp photo
- Doesn't want to bother playing phone tag to reserve
- Functionality:** Quickly book reservation using existing PayPal account
- Would like to share about his experiences online
- Edit reservation easily, in case weather changes or something comes up with his wife or daughter
- Emotional:** Being his helpful companion and connection with the world while he's out
- Usefulness/Emotional:** Helps him appreciate environment and share his experiences with others
- Share photos of birds and scenery on social media- get others excited about environment
- Clock timer- if renting by the hour, so he knows how long he has left- doesn't want to come in too early and miss out on fun, but doesn't want to arrive late & be charged extra hour

Tech Skills

- Tech savvy- as a Gen-Xer, he's at the age where he has been young enough to integrate new technology for his career and to suit his personal needs and hobbies
- Uses camera phone often

Features Shawn Would Like:

- Booking Rental
- PayPal Integration
- Editing Reservations
- Built-in camera/geotagging
- Photo sharing on map and Facebook
- Rental countdown timer
- Weather forecast- current and future conditions



Features Shawn Wouldn't Use:

- Already lives in Smithfield and knows attractions, so wouldn't use map of local attractions or restaurants
- Wouldn't look at safety instructions much, since he's done this many times

Personality Traits



Key Values

- Communing with Nature
- Being Active
- Solitude after hectic week
- Fun

* Apps that Shawn Uses



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Christa

“It is up to you to see the beauty of everyday things”

Job title:	Editor
Industry:	Media (Newspaper, Arts)
Company:	AltDaily Intimate, artsy, casual but fast-paced environment Uses Adobe Creative Suite & Microsoft Office
Home Tech Use:	Laptop for image editing (Gimp), bill paying and her iPhone for most everything else. Uses Instagram and SnapChat

Female, active photog
28 years old, lives in Suffolk, VA (about .5 hour from Smithfield), grew up in Virginia Beach (about 1 hour from Smithfield)
Millennial
Single, has a boyfriend, no children
Lives in a 2 bedroom condo with a roommate

User Scenario

1. In the arts newspaper that she works for, Christa reads about kayaking at Windsor Castle Park and the accompanying app. 2. She downloads the app and decides to book a kayak for a Sunday that she has free the following month. 3. She checks availability for that day and books a 2 hour slot using her credit card. 4. The payment is confirmed and she signs the mandatory waiver. 5. On that Sunday, Christa uses the app's address link to GPS directions to find the park/kayak launch. 6. She brings her phone so she can take photos. 7. She picks up her kayak, launches, and takes many photos. 8. She shares some of them on Instagram and Snapchat while still on the water. 9. She returns the kayak then finds a nearby café on the app map. 10. She decides to drive there for lunch, then leaves Smithfield for home.

Her job is enjoyable and challenging, but busy with tight deadlines and the pay is low. She needs budget friendly activities and can't afford expensive yoga studios. She uses her phone for other exercises, such as yoga and pilates at home via Yoga Studio app. She swims at local beaches, walks, rides her bike for exercise. She's always up for trying other forms of exercise, especially if it's within her budget. She's been to Smithfield, but is not overly familiar with their new restaurants or attractions. She wouldn't mind finding a place for a sandwich or a wrap after kayaking for a couple hours. She has only kayaked once, in Virginia Beach, and would like to try it again.

Hobbies and Interests

- Loves photography and taking pictures of hidden gems and from unusual vantage points
- Likes brands like Trader Joe's, Patagonia, and websites like Etsy

Environment/Context

- Exercises regularly
- Learned about the park through a local arts website
- Works for a small local arts newspaper, doing image editing, layouts, editing
- Has a DSLR and a smartphone camera- uses both regularly

Motivations

- Maintaining weight is important
- Wanting to see beauty in nature, without having to travel too far
- Not wanting to spend too much money
- Is happy to find an alternate activity (kayaking) for her exercise plan
- "Eat healthy. Sleep well. Breathe deeply. Enjoy life."
- Likes making a difference in the world

Goals

- Stay fit
- Take great, unusual photos to show off online and to friends
- "We cannot become what we want to be by remaining what we are"- wants to grow and be challenged as a person
- Experience new things and share these experiences with boyfriend or friends (virtually)

Frustrations

- Low paying job- wishes for more money to do things she wants to do

Experience Expectations * (See apps that Christa uses)

- **Functionality:** Use fun, attractive, interface with attractive photos
- Photo taking, sharing, and viewing- would like resolution comparable to her DSLR (at least in daylight)
- Efficiently book rental using saved credit card account, like Amazon
- Share photos on Instagram and Snapchat
- **Emotional:** Wants an app that fits into her worldview and lifestyle- "health conscious" "see beauty around me"
- Wants an app that's like a companion
- **Emotional:** App is there for safety, since she's a beginner
- **Useful:** Find café nearby for healthy, inexpensive lunch after the paddle
- Take cool, creative images from unique points of view, of landscapes only visible from kayak

Tech Skills

- Tech-savvy: technology has been integrated into her whole life while growing up

Features Christa Would Like:

- Send invite to reservation (for boyfriend)
- Booking kayak rental- using credit card information
- Camera/geotagging
- Sharing pics on Instagram and Snapchat










Features Christa Wouldn't Use:

- She doesn't use Facebook much, so wouldn't share pictures there
- She doesn't have a PayPal account, so wouldn't use that option

Personality Traits

Introverted

Artsy

Health Conscious

Fun-loving

Creative

Smart

Extroverted



Key Values

Creativity

Health

Fun

Being Active

* Apps that Christa Uses










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1 Nice outdoorsy logo, nature photo- emotionally appeals to outdoor, nature-lovers. Offers clear selections in drop-down menu- usability

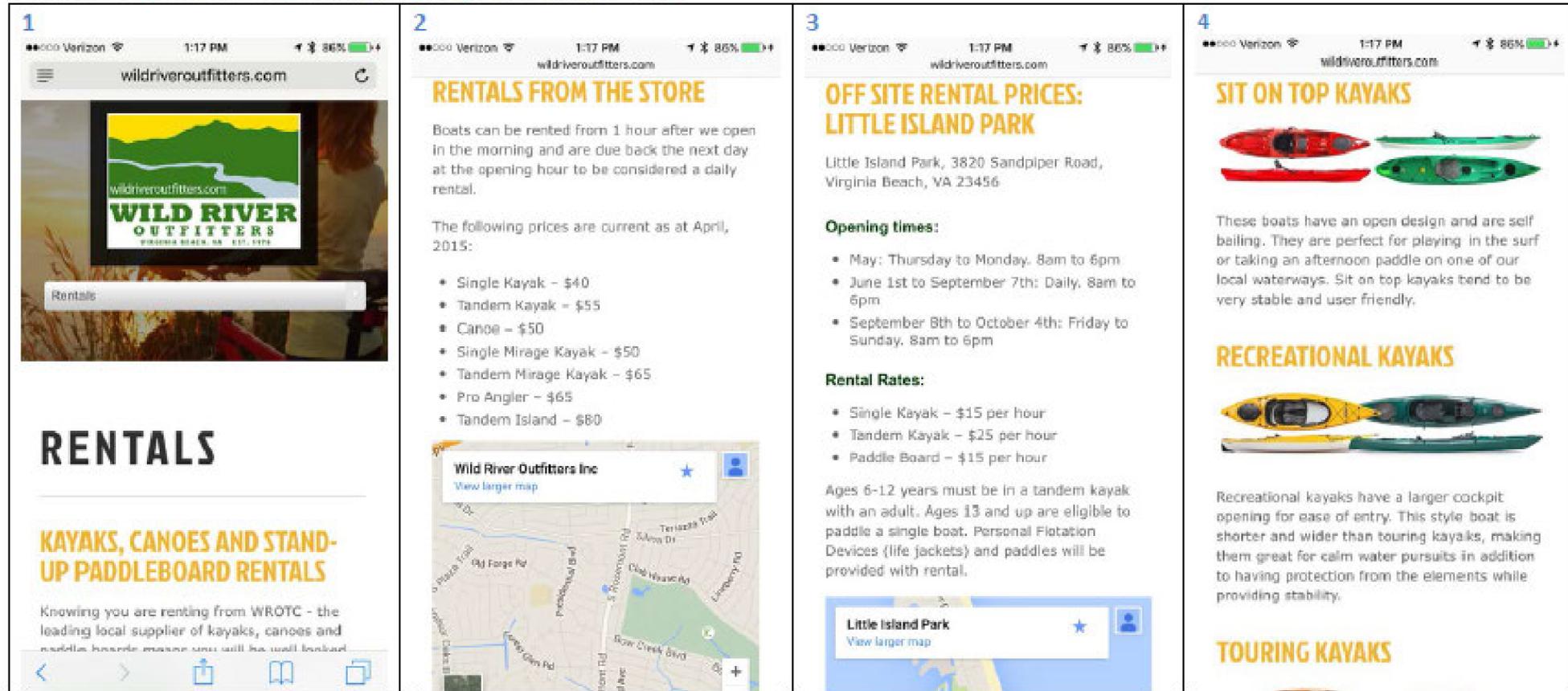
2 Lists prices and a map- useful information. Upfront about costs

3 Provides schedule and rates- more useful information. Upfront about costs.

4 Describes various kayaks offered, with images- more useful information that appeals to beginners who don't know about what different kayaks look like- provides comfort and confidence to newbies

Castle Kayaks will use some of these features, but improve upon the functionality and interactivity and also be helpful while on the water and afterwards.

Wild River Outfitters- VA Beach Kayak and SUP rentals



Pros and Cons of this competitor

Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Near tourist sites, restaurants, ocean – well-known – tourists are coming here anyway Not brackish water- particularly important for SUP because people may fall in (safety concerns about swallowing water) Might see dolphins or whales More “cool” “hip” “glamorous” “partying” vibe in VA Beach
Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No phone app (only mobile-friendly site) for rentals and website is not very interactive Farther away for those in Smithfield area- Smithfield is its own niche More difficult kayak launching than the one in Smithfield (the launch in Windsor Castle Park is considered state-of-the-art for ease of use with rollers to gently roll yourself into the water) More expensive than Windsor Castle Park (\$15/hr vs \$10/hr) Crowds too big for those with alone time

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1 Provides contact information, which is good, but encourages interaction offline, as opposed to on the mobile site. The “welcome” screen is not very inviting and provides no emotional or visual appeal.

2 Cancellation policy is one of the first options that comes up- not very fun or welcoming. Provides the negative upfront. Uses the word non-refundable, which is not very encouraging emotionally

3 Site submission form does allow for some interaction and ability to contact the business with questions. All fields are just text fields, instead of more specific date/calendar fields, drop-down menus, etc. where appropriate

4 Local Interests screen indicates they’ve thought of the value of providing information about local attractions, however the screen is blank. Again, not very encouraging to users to actually use this service.

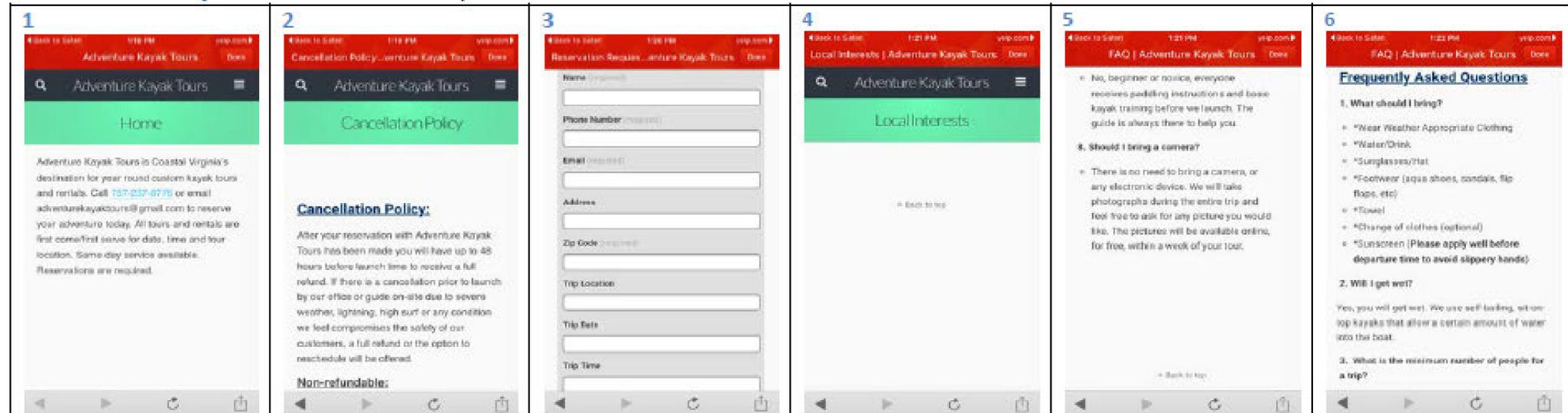
5 FAQs: This is meant more for tours, as opposed to rentals, but this does not even encourage users to bring their phone while on the boat. Although there are considerations for bringing a phone on a kayak (such as making sure it’s in a waterproof pouch around your neck), I think a phone could potentially be useful during the whole kayaking process (before, during, and after). Some may like that the guides take pictures, but those we are targeting for Castle Kayaks will want to take the pictures themselves- they may be by themselves, will likely not be on a tour, and many will be photography buffs who want to be creative with their own photography.

6 FAQs: What should I bring? is useful information that has the user in mind.

Castle Kayaks will approach the touchpoints of kayak rental booking from a different perspective- instead of doing most of the interaction offline, it will automate and enable many of the processes in the app. Castle Kayaks also encourages app use while on the water and afterwards with its helpful and fun features and interactivity. It will incorporate the idea of What Should I Bring? into its information, in the Before You Go section.

Castle Kayaks will provide more of an emotional connection with the user than this mobile site does.

Adventure Kayak Tours- VA Beach Kayak rentals



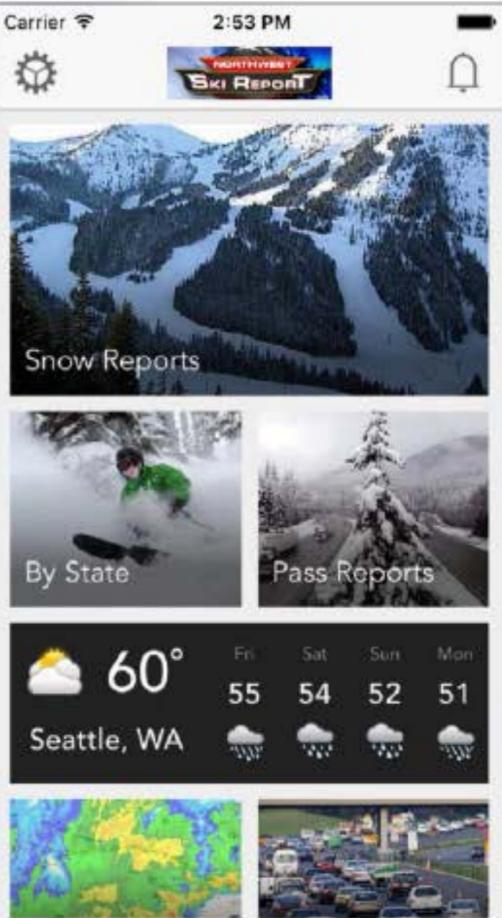
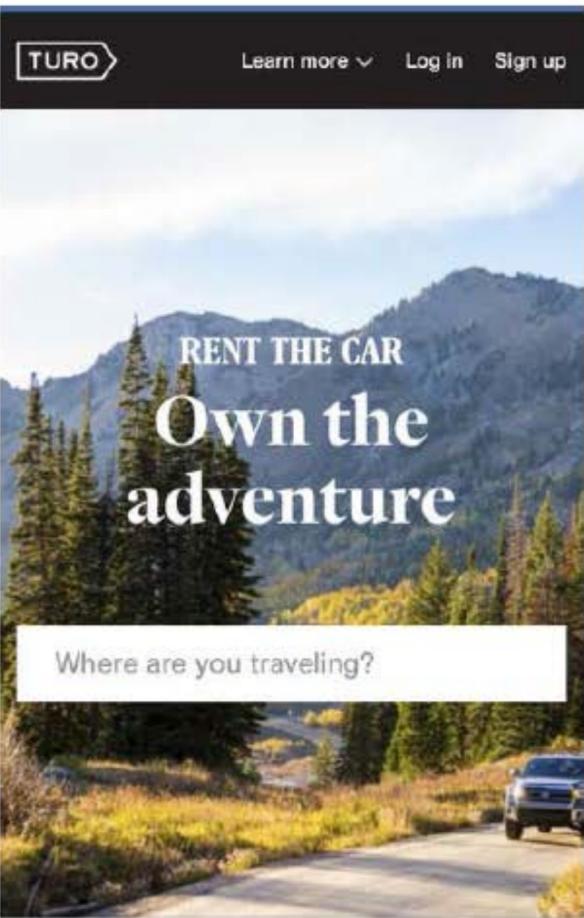
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Inspirations for Welcome Screen Designs:

- Thumbnails
- Icons
- Minimalist
- Grids
- Dominant outdoorsy photography
- Modern
- Blues, whites, blacks



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Icons used wherever possible. Most of them are familiar. New ones, such as the kayak icon, are pretty clear and understandable.

Example Icons and Affordances:

Invite Icon: 	Book Kayak Icon: 	Wildlife Icon: 	Events Icon: 	
Scroll to the Right Cues: 	Take Photo Button/Camera Icon: 	Big Login Button: 	Rental Timer Message and Text: 00:01:00 X	
Before You Go / Info Icon: 	Map and Nearby Icons: 	Layers Icon for Map Layers: 	Weather Icons: 	
Facebook Icon: 	Instagram Icon: 	Snapchat Icon: 	PayPal Icon: 	
Login Icon: 	Register Icon: 	Logout Icon: 	What to Bring Icon: 	Safety Tips Icon: 
Restaurant Icon: 	Attraction Icon: 	Park Facilities Icon: 	You are here Icon: 	

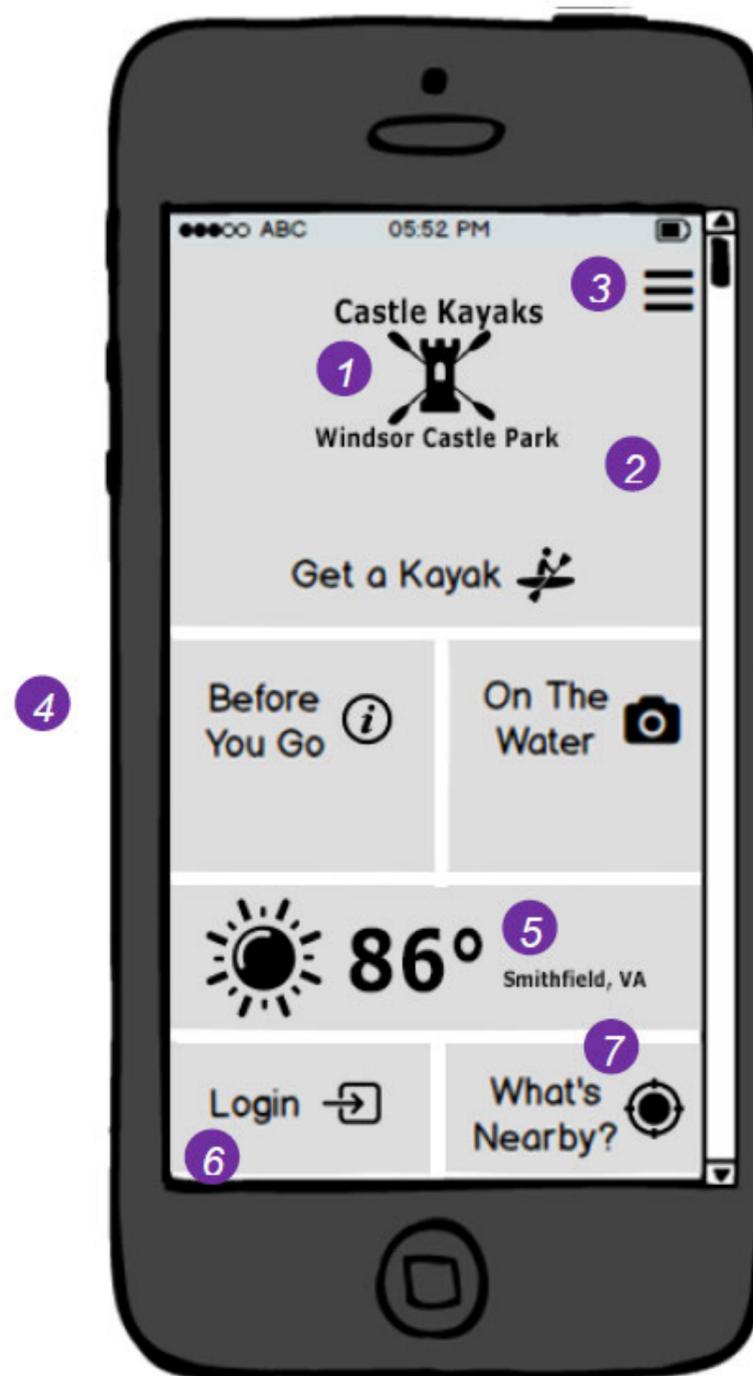
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Chosen concept wireframes (high level screens):

Welcome Screen

- 1 Title/Logo
- 2 Attractive photo of water and marshes at Windsor Castle Park, to appeal to photography/nature lovers
- 3 Sandwich Menu is always accessible and provides access to main features from wherever you are, including the ability to log in at anytime
- 4 Large button icons with short text and recognizable icons take users to the 4 main sections of the app. These are located prominently, even above login/register, because many tasks, such as looking up various information, can be performed without logging in
- 5 Current weather Icons are grabbed from a weather feed/ app, displaying the icon for sun, clouds, rain, etc. as well as the current temperature in large clear numbers. The town, Smithfield, VA, is also mentioned, so that users stumbling upon this for the first time know where this park is.
- 6 Large Log In button that's fairly prominent and easy to tap (even on a boat), but is not necessary to enter the site so is located on the bottom
- 7 What's Nearby goes to list of nearby businesses, such as restaurants and attractions



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Before You Go Screen

- 1 Back link- available on all screens, except Welcome
- 2 Title of screen
- 3 Sandwich Menu is always accessible and provides access to main features from wherever you are, including the ability to log in at anytime
- 4 Current weather Icons are grabbed from weather app, displaying the icon for sun, clouds, rain, etc. as well as the current temperature in large clear numbers. The town, Smithfield, VA, is also mentioned, so that users stumbling upon this for the first time know where this park is
- 5 Name of park and address, which links to GPS directions.
- 6 Very brief description of park (Opened in 2010, 208 acres, etc...)
- 7 4 large button icons with short text and recognizable icons take users to the main screens in the informational part of the app under Before You Go. These are large and easy to tap.



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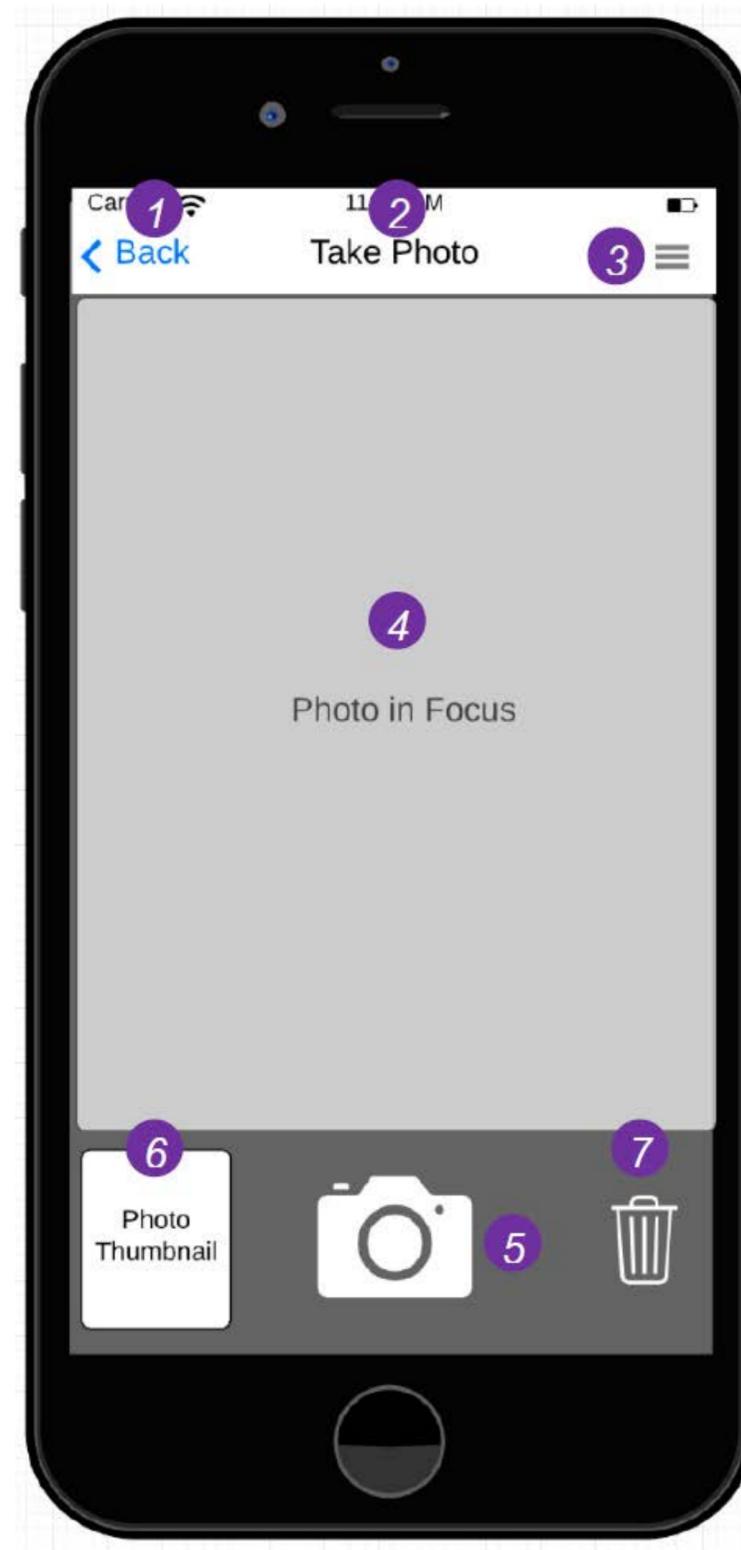
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Photos Screen

- 1 Back link- available on all screens, except Welcome
- 2 Title of screen
- 3 Sandwich Menu
- 4 Photo area being focused and framed- maximizes screen real estate by using most of the screen
- 5 Large, easily recognizable button icon to take photo. Hard to miss, even while on a kayak.
- 6 Tappable photo thumbnail shows previously taken image. Similar to standard phone camera apps.
- 7 Trash can to delete photo just taken

NOTE:

Photos have automatic image stabilization and are geotagged on map upon Save.

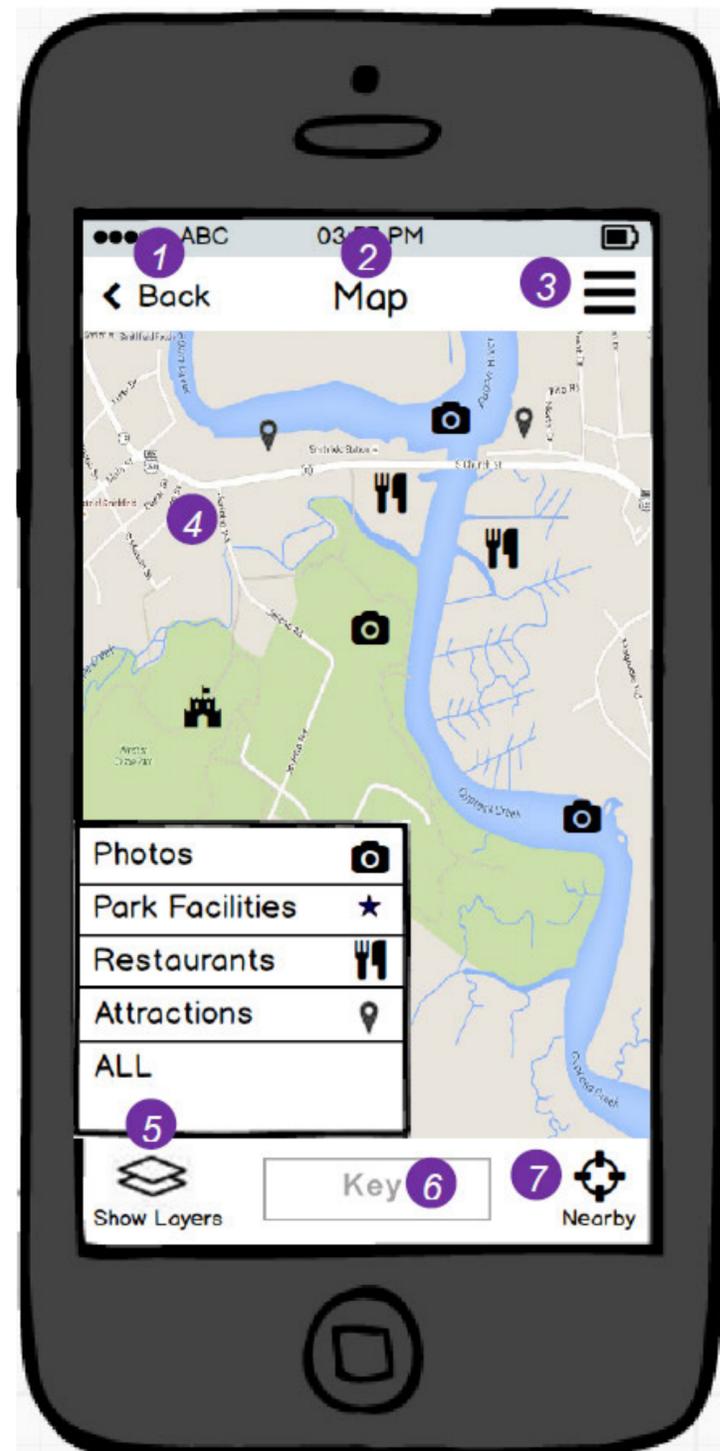


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Map Screen

- 1 Back link- available on all screens, except Welcome
- 2 Title of screen
- 3 Sandwich Menu
- 4 Map that's zoomable and pinchable with icons
- 5 Show Layers toggle button shows menu of various layers that can show icons on the map (Photos, Park Facilities, Restaurants, Attractions, ALL). Show Layers, while selected and showing menu switches to Hide Menu, which then hides menu. Some users may want to see everything at once- others may want to simplify map and focus on what they are looking for (i.e. restaurants)
- 6 Legend key shows Trail, Road, and Bridge indicators on the map.
- 7 Nearby Icon button links to list of local businesses (same screen as What's Nearby? which is accessible via main sandwich menu).



Castle Kayaks Smartphone App

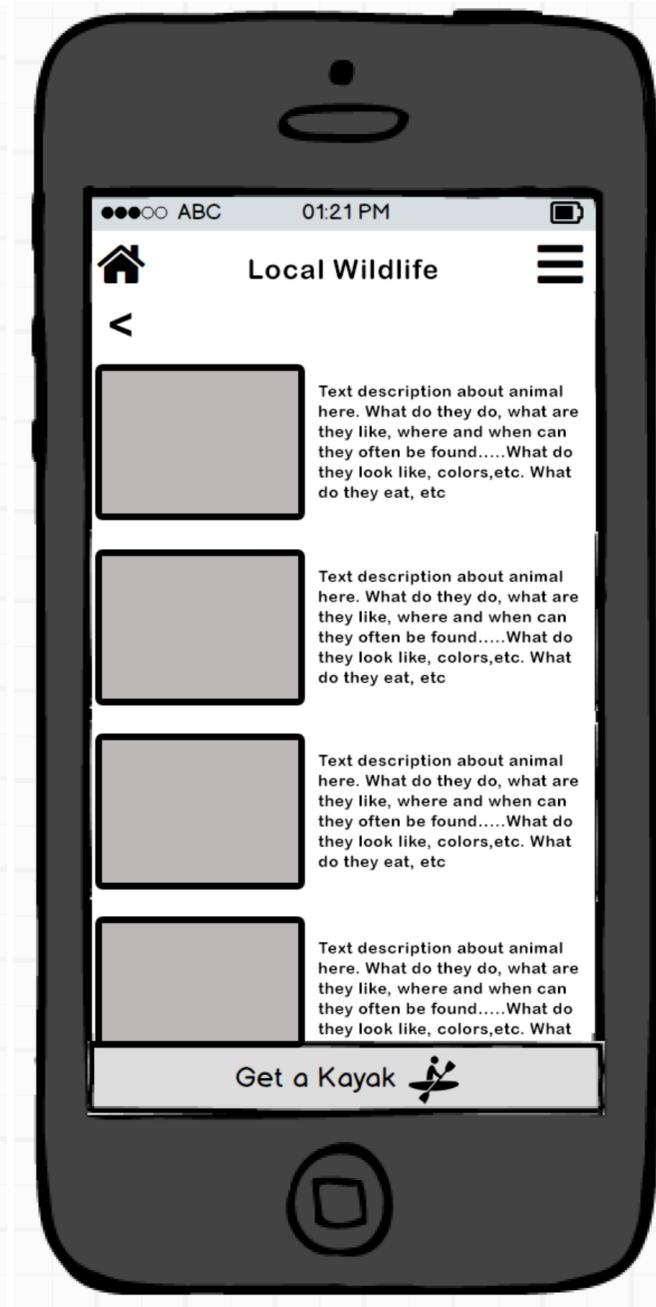
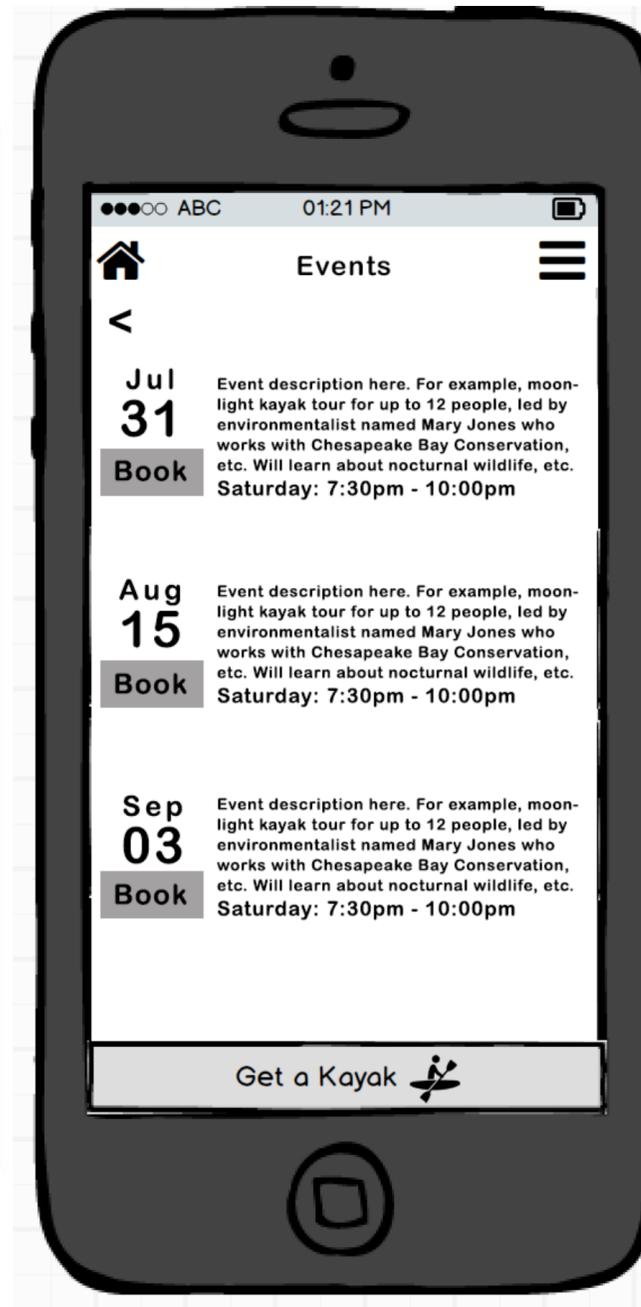
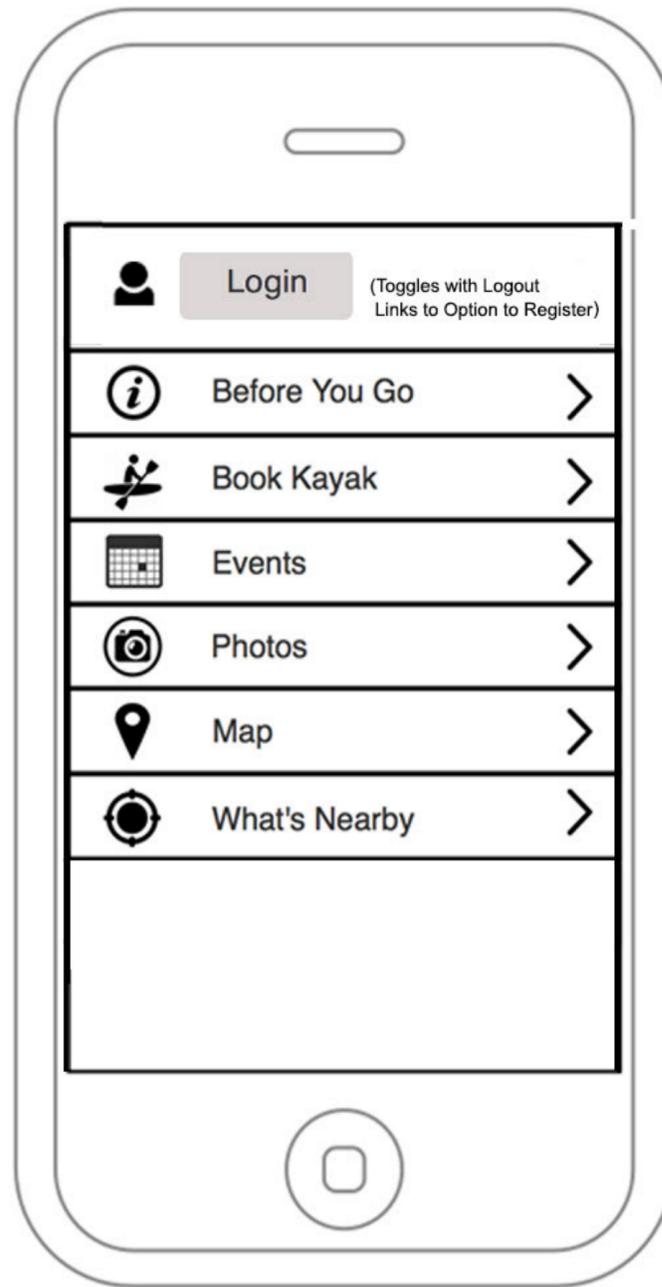
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Other Wireframes

Icons and short phrases used to drill into major functionality of the app.

Ability to login/log out at any time by tapping hamburger menu. Login/Logout toggles depending on current user login status.

Login screen will also have option to register if user has never registered.

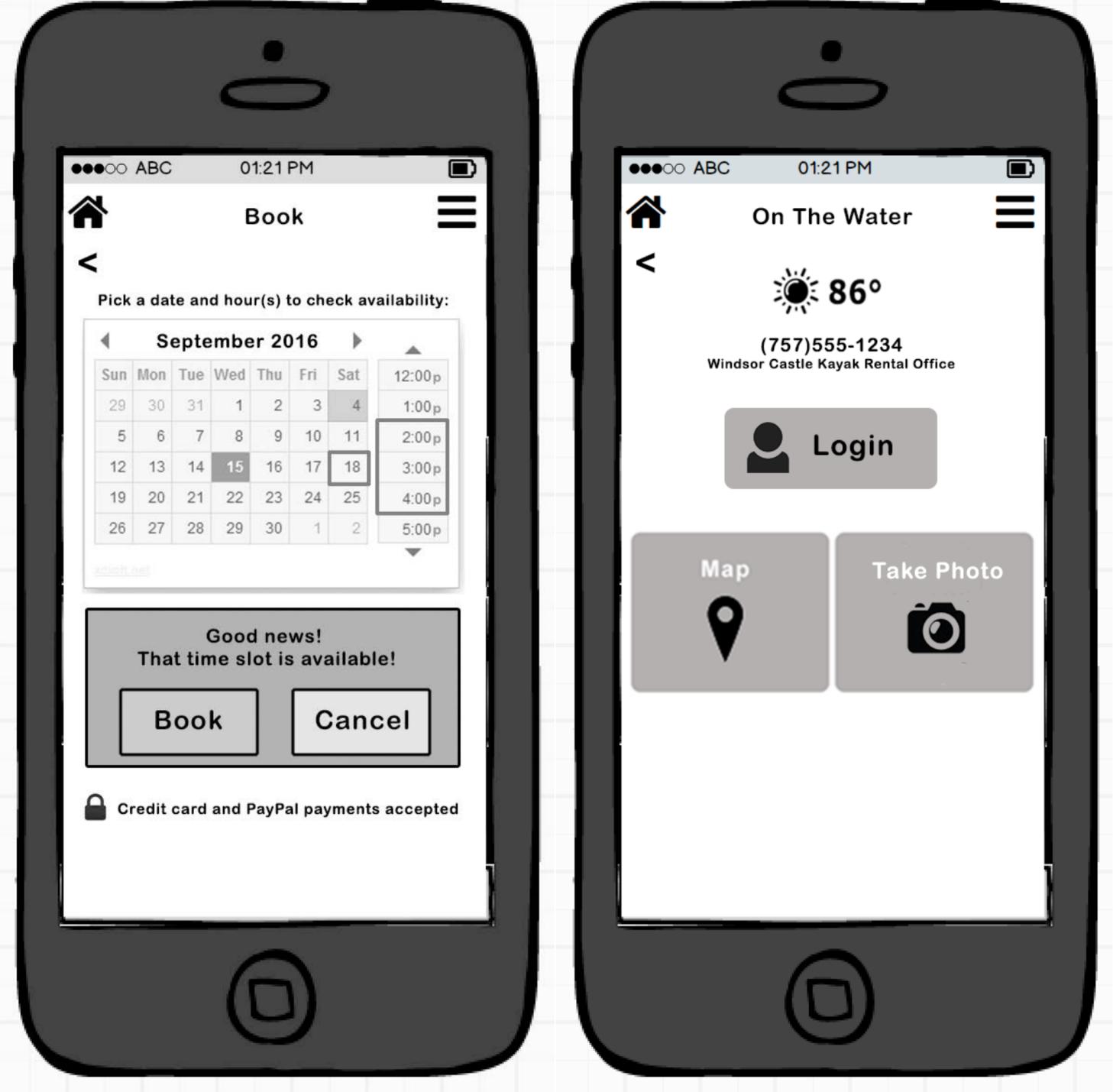


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Calendar will highlight the current date, as well as dates of special events, and the date and timeframe that user is selecting to check availability (each category will be marked with a different color)

Statement about payment is provided to encourage users to go through with the process, by telling them how they can pay for it, and giving confidence and a sense of security to the users



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Visual Design

Attractive outdoor photos are prevalent- must be dark enough with enough solid areas of color to allow text to stand out

Areas of solid color also used as contrast and to allow icons, text to stand out

Profile icon so user can easily log in/register as appropriate

Welcome Screen

