

Root Trails

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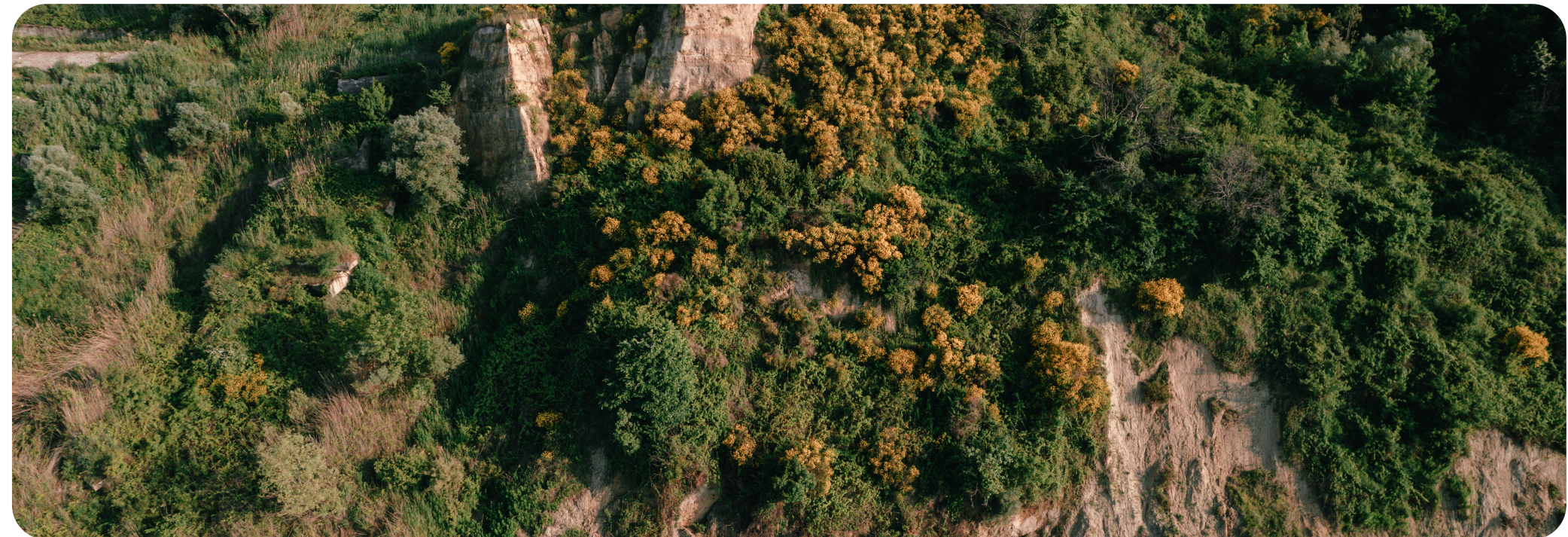
A JOURNEY THROUGH NATURE

HIKING | GROUP EVENTS | INDIGENOUS STORIES

PROBLEM STATEMENT & USER CONTEXT

People who are curious about learning Indigenous history need a way to actively learn and engage.

People want an enjoyable way to understand Indigenous culture, the land's stories





USER RESEARCH

- **Motivation:** Relax, enjoy nature, stay active, disconnect from technology
 - **Pain points:** trail info is confusing, weather, transportation, hard to find someone to go with
 - **Learning interests:** Indigenous culture, local history, and stories about land
- **App expectations:** clear routes, helpful landmarks, offline use and meaningful Indigenous cultural and nature learning.



KEY GOALS

- Make outdoor exploration easy and fun
- Make learning about Indigenous culture and local geology
- Provide clear routes and offline-friendly features
- Encourage learning and connection with nature



PERSONA

“REACHED A BEAUTIFUL WATERFALL!!”

Emily is a marketing manager from Vancouver who spends most of her weekends exploring nearby trails. While she’s confident using navigation apps and enjoys discovering new places, she often wishes her hikes felt more meaningful. Emily has a growing interest in Indigenous culture and wants to learn about the lands she visits in a respectful, accessible way.

- She aims to use her phone for navigation while hiking and to connect with nature by learning its history.
- She struggles to find reliable, respectful information about Indigenous People and the land.
- Navigation apps typically emphasize distances and trails but lack cultural context.






JOURNEY MAP

This journey map shows Emily's process of trying to find a hiking trail to go during the weekend.

She's not the type that's keen on research so downloading a hiking app should be a perfect solution for her!

Emily is happily surprised that Root Trails has a story feature which lets you read stories and historical facts about the areas you've hiked at.

This checks off helping her navigate while hiking and fulfilling that interest in history.

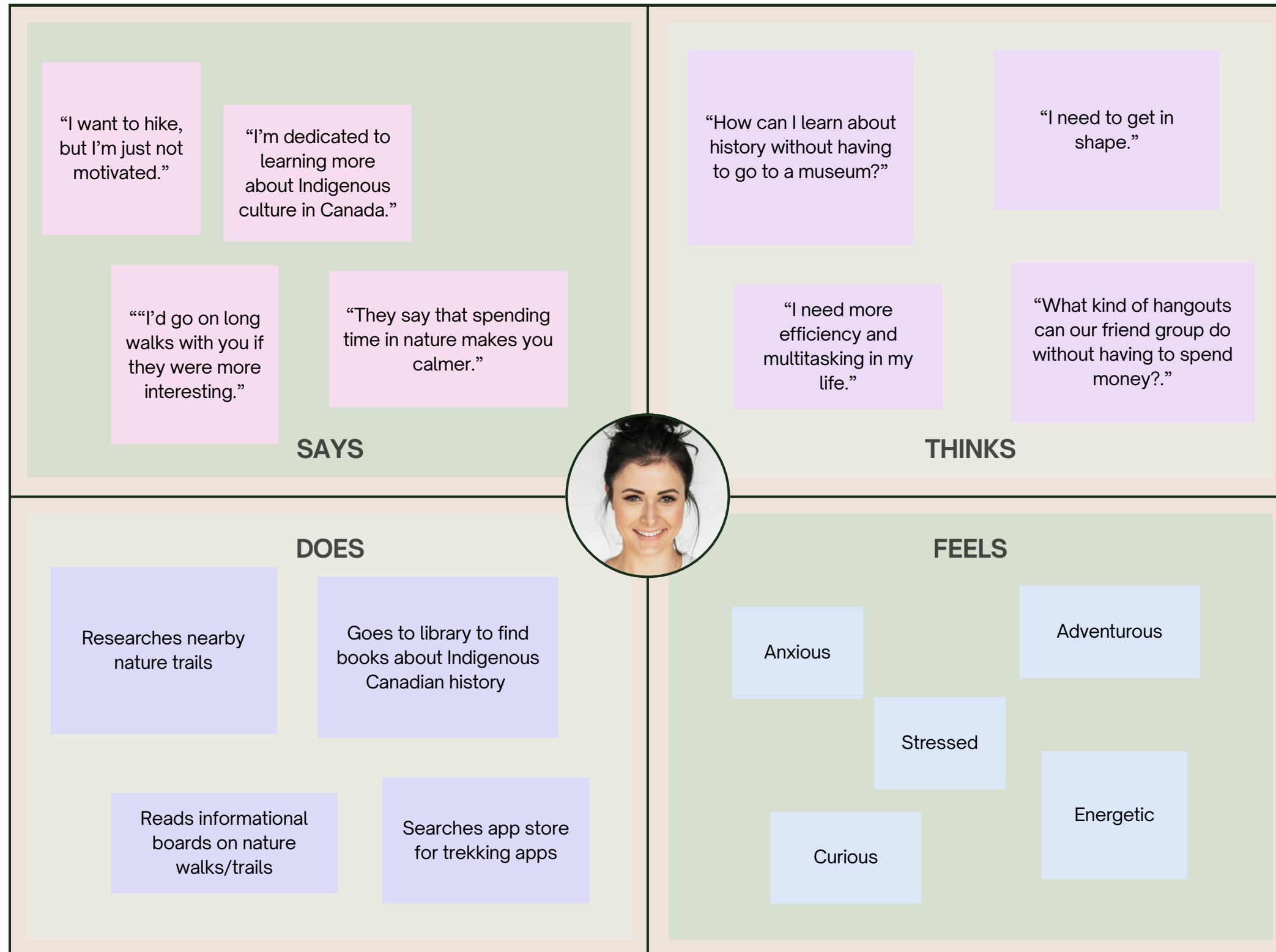
 <p>USER INFO "If you aren't out of breath, you aren't doing it right!"</p>	<p>SCENARIO Emily is looking for a new trail to hike this weekend.</p>		<p>EXPECTATIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wants to be near a body of water • Use her phone for navigation • Hopes to learn more about the land she's on 	
<p>STAGES</p>	<p>STAGE 1 ▶</p>	<p>STAGE 2 ▶</p>	<p>STAGE 3 ▶</p>	<p>STAGE 4 ▶</p>
<p>GOALS</p>	<p>Finding a trail to hike.</p>	<p>Planning the hike.</p>	<p>Navigation of app.</p>	<p>Using app on hike.</p>
<p>ACTIONS</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Scrolling social media 2. Texting group chat 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Searching Google Maps 2. Downloading hiking apps 3. Researching trails 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explores recommended section 2. Checks out "Events" 3. Taps on "Stories" 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Used the app to help navigate while on trail 2. Checked her statistics at the end of the hike
<p>THOUGHTS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should I go alone or with friends? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using a trail app is easier than going on the web • I don't like downloading multiple apps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What this "Stories" tab? • Likes that some stories are about Indigenous People 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I get it now. I complete a trail and unlock a story • I like how it allows me to use the map offline for free
<p>PAIN POINTS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I wish there was a filter option for locations • I wish it was easier to find fellow hikers to go with 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I wish they'd tell me a difficulty level for the trail • Ugh, I have to pay or use the maps offline? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Darn, all of these are locked, so I can't read the stories • How do I unlock the stories? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certain part of statistics are paywalled
<p>EMOTIONS</p>	 <p>Bored</p>	 <p>Annoyed</p>	 <p>Curious</p>	 <p>Happy</p>
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have a filter option 2. Have an events tab for people to find hiking buddies easier 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Allow users to download trail maps without paywalling 2. Show users important trail info, like difficulty level or restrictions (ex: no pets on trail) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Modal popup to explain story feature 2. Allow a few stories to be available to read immediately 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hiking statistics (ie: Steps, milage walked, etc) available for free

EMPATHY MAP

FEELINGS, THOUGHTS, ACTIONS & WORDS

Emily deals with difficult feelings like anxiety and stress. She also has energy that she wants to exude in a positive way and is curious about the world.

Her thoughts, speech and actions all reflect these things that she feels. She finds the Root Trails app when searching on the app store for something that will help organize hikes as well as teach her about Indigenous Canadian history.



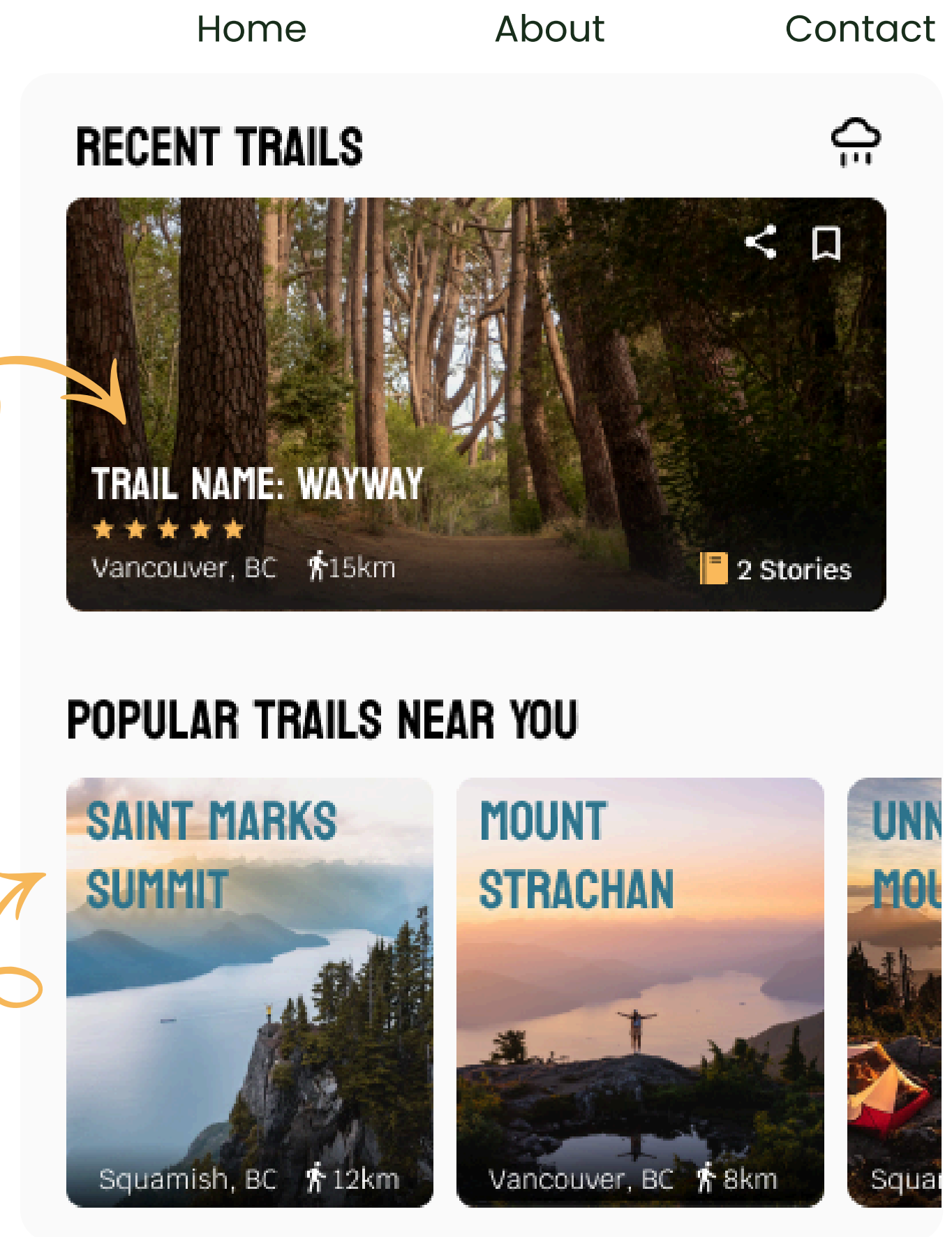
DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Emphasis - Use of large images and text in corners to draw the eye

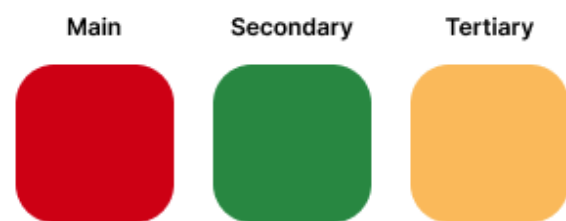
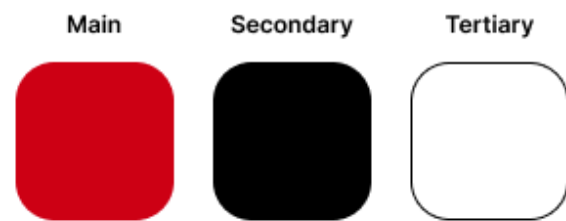
Contrast - We applied a faint gradient to help the text pop out more

Proportion- We mainly used rectangles and squares throughout the app for variation

White Space - A nice white background to help us emphasize tappable icons we want users to interact with



DESIGN PRINCIPLES



HEADING - TITLE - KOULEN

SUBHEADING - SUBTITLE - KOULEN

Body Text - Paragraph - Lato



UNDERSTAND, EXPLORE, MATERIALIZE

We chose to get color inspiration from real indigenous art, voting to go for the middle palette.

Although red is an important color to indigenous people, it clashed with the other colors we chose, so we decided not to include it in our app.

The fonts we chose are Koulen and Lato.

ROOT TRAILS

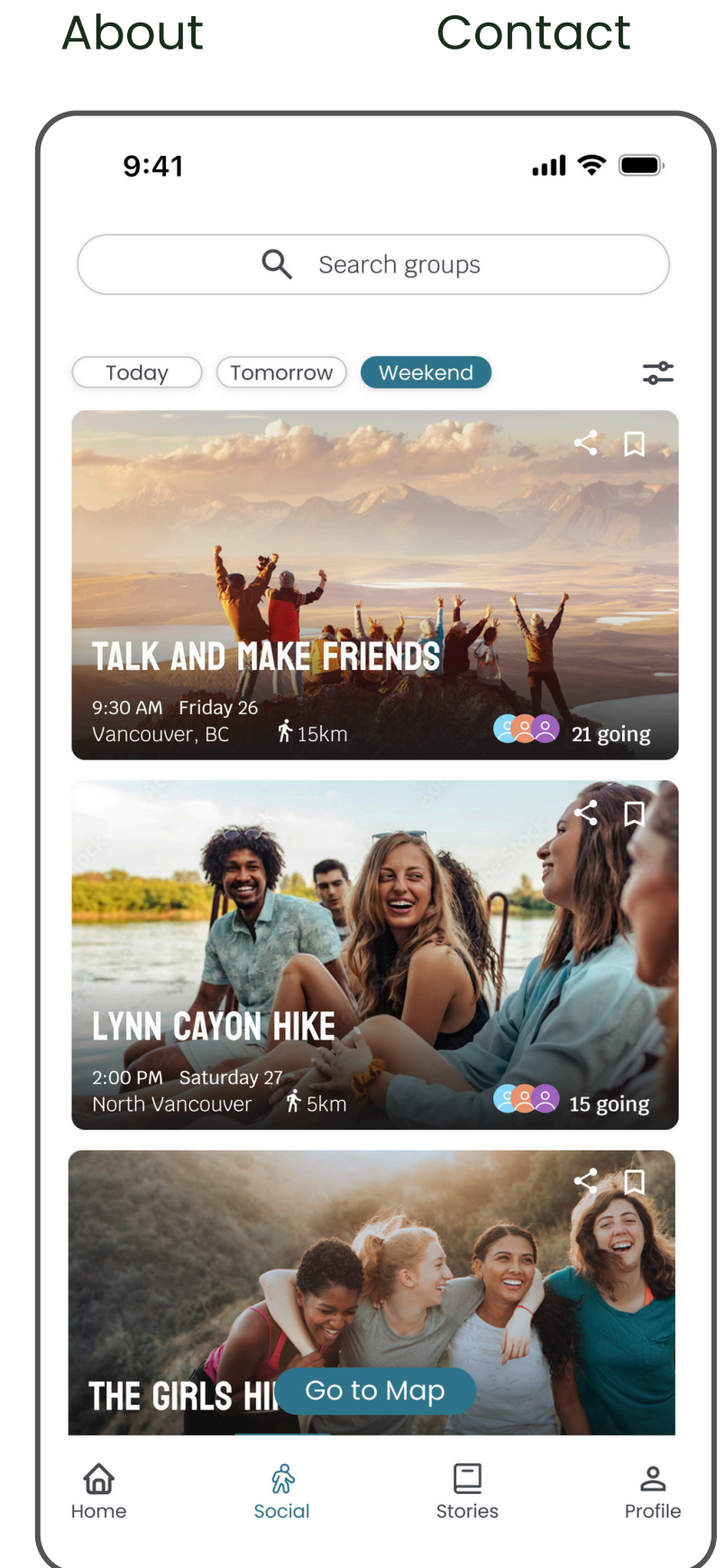
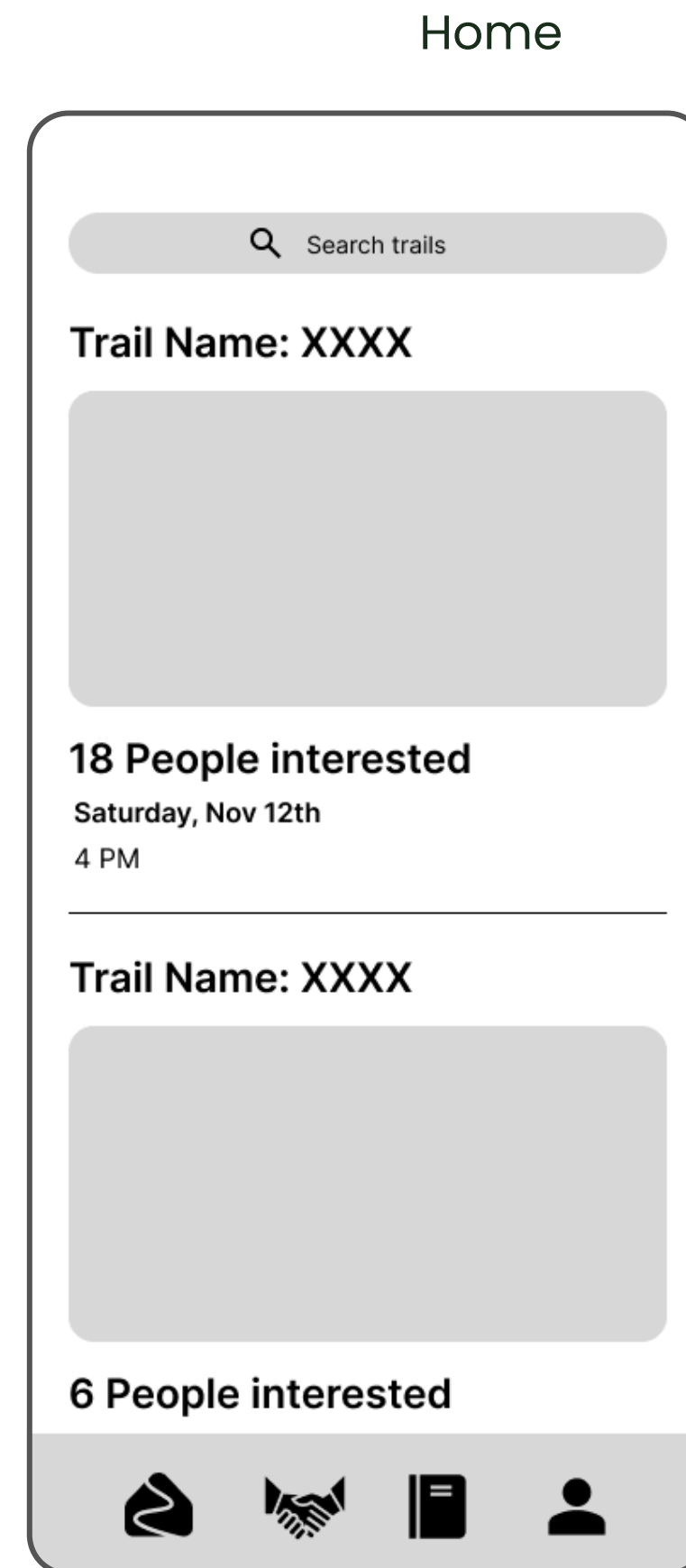
DESIGN PROCESS

DESIGN PROCESS - ITERATIONS

In designing the social aspect of the app, testing revealed its **importance to users**.

For the high-fidelity designs, quick **filters** such as 'Today,' 'Tomorrow,' and 'Weekend' were added, as well as an icon for more specific filters users might need. Social meetings are **visually grouped**, unlike in the low-fidelity wireframe. A spacing scale of 4 was implemented in the high-fidelity design for uniformity and a professional appearance.

The following icons were added: event sharing, saving, distance, and attendee icons. Improvements were also made to the bottom menu icons for better **clarity**, and a 'Go To Map' button was added for quick access.



ROOT TRAILS

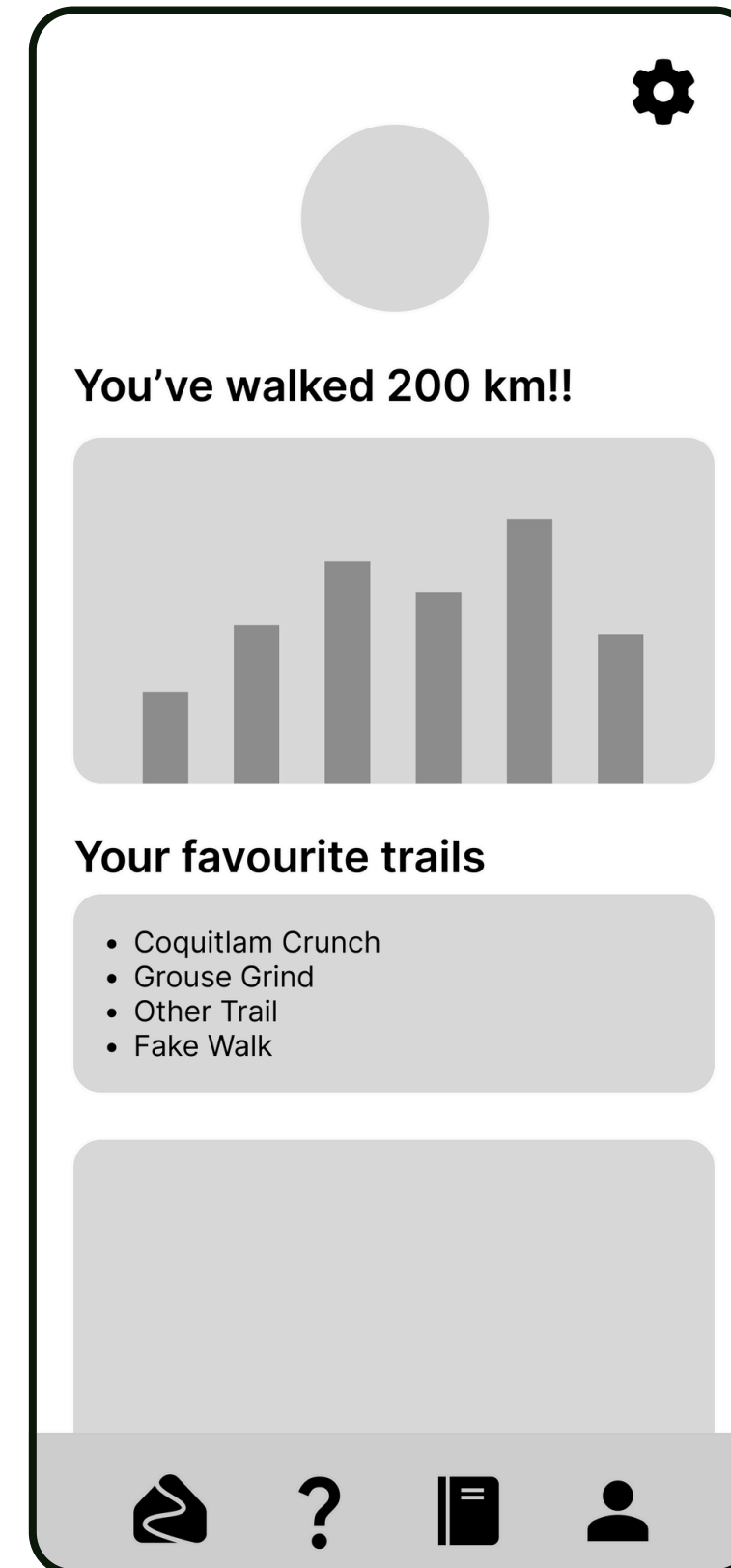
DESIGN PROCESS

DESIGN PROCESS - ITERATIONS

For the profile, we wanted to showcase the user's progress and provide a calendar so they can track their activity.

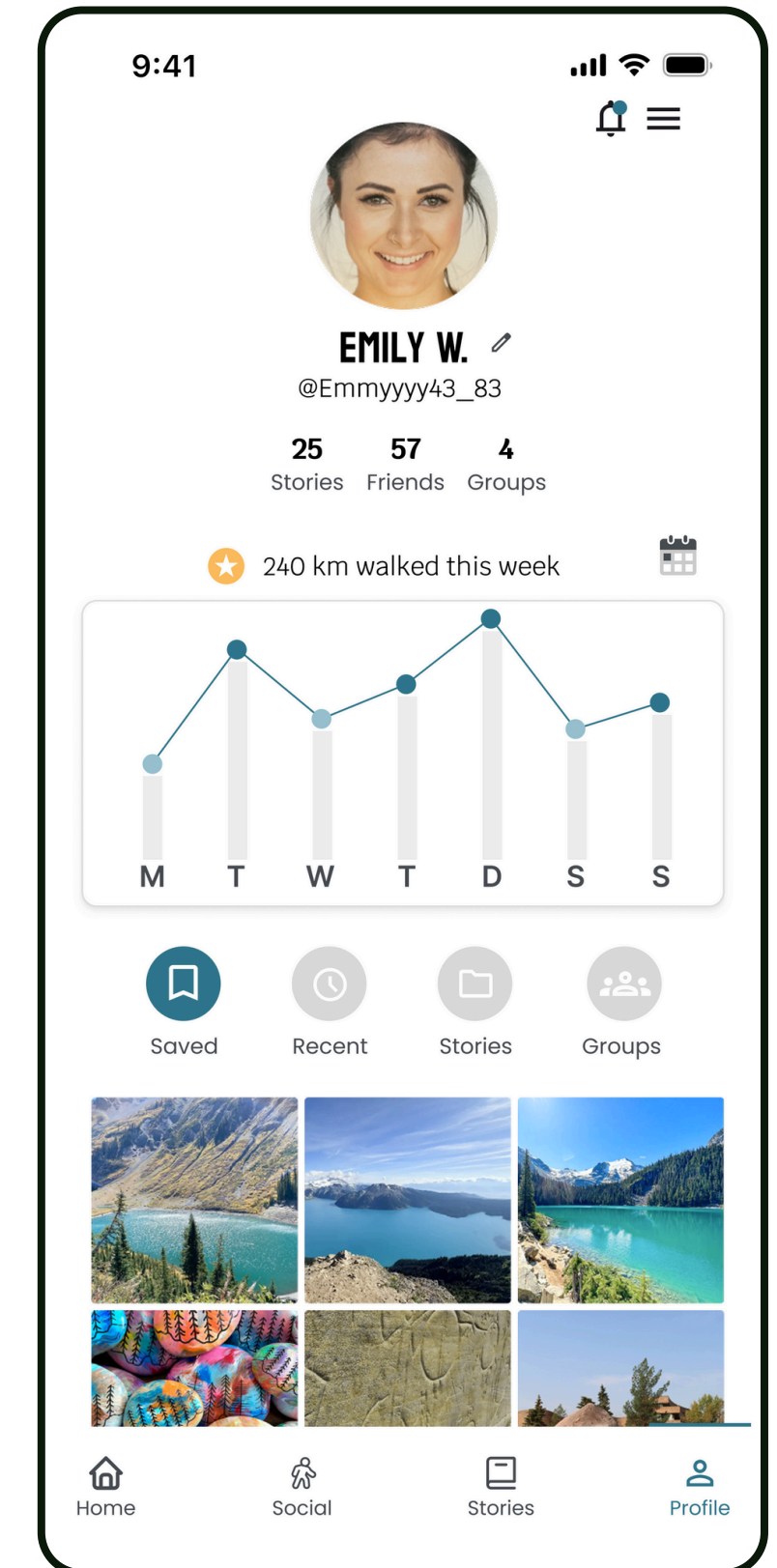
With the addition of social features, completed stories, group memberships, and friend counts are immediately visible. The interface allows quick and easy access, displaying this information in a three-column grid similar to familiar social media layouts.

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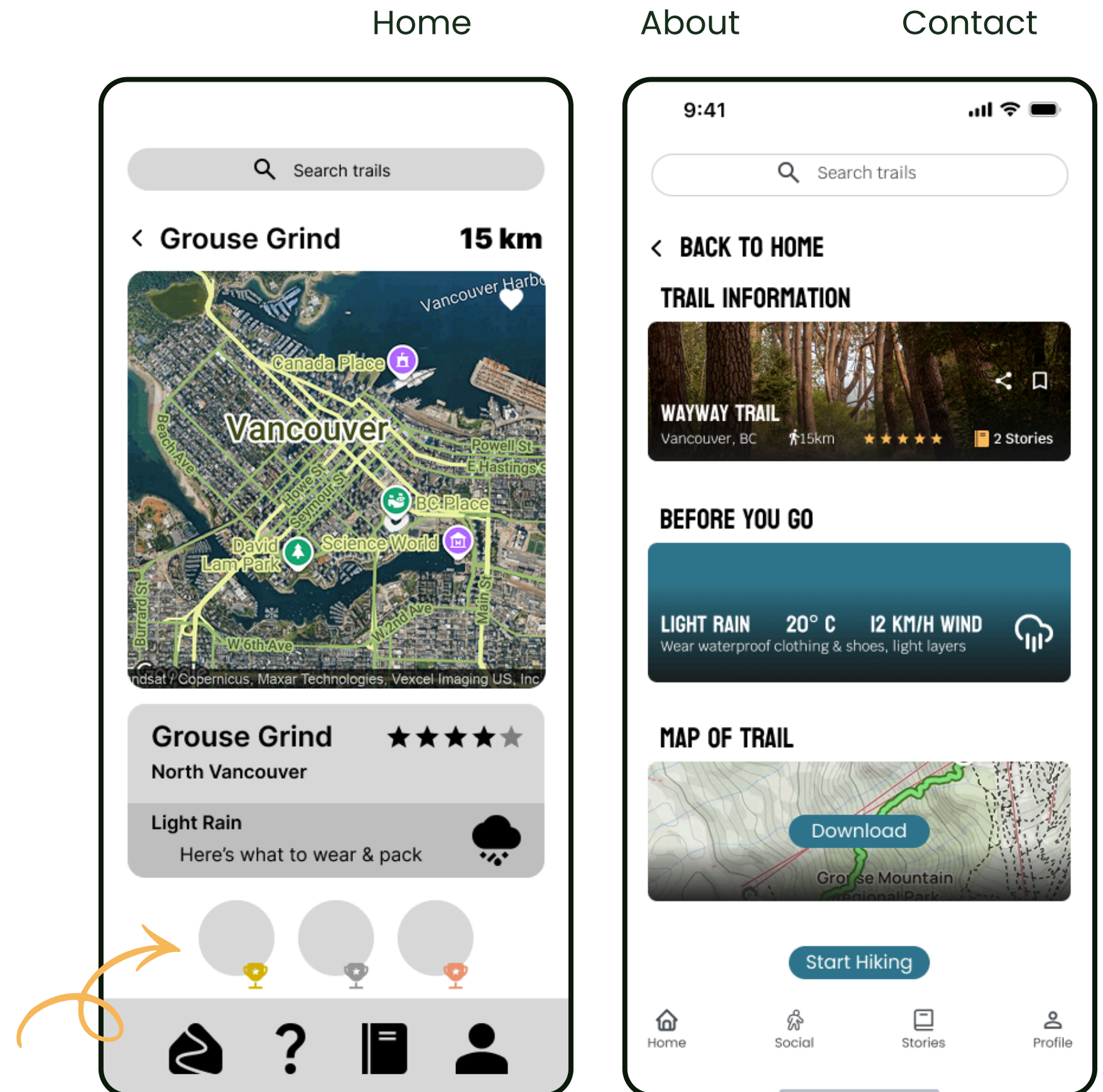
DESIGN PROCESS

DESIGN PROCESS - ITERATIONS

As you can see our Trail Info screen is quite different from the original.

We used to a ranking system, for those who have our app and go on that specific trail frequently, but decided it'd look odd in the final version.

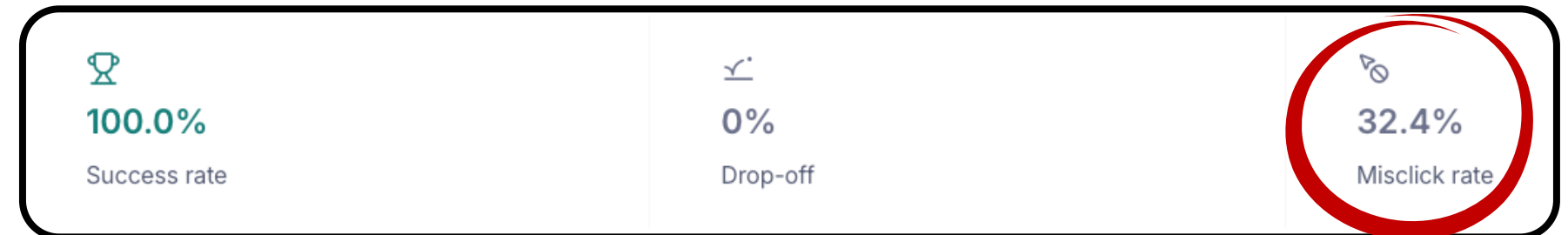
Instead we decided to condense the information to look more uniform with the rest of the app.



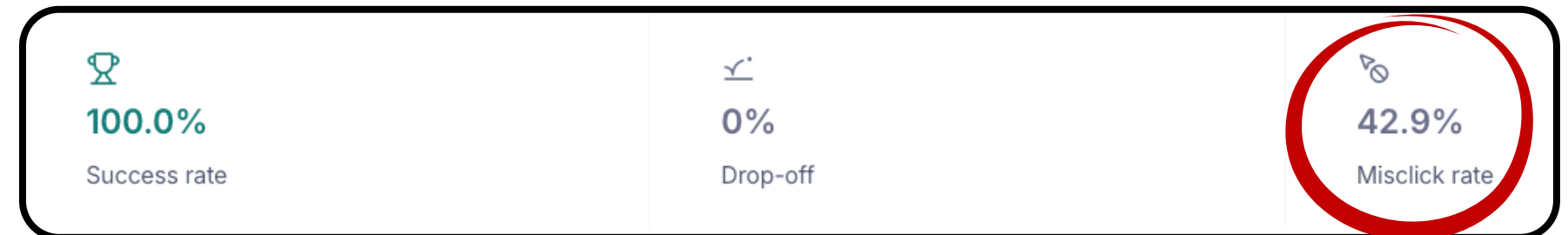
USER TESTING

Using Maze, we moderated as users completed these tasks:

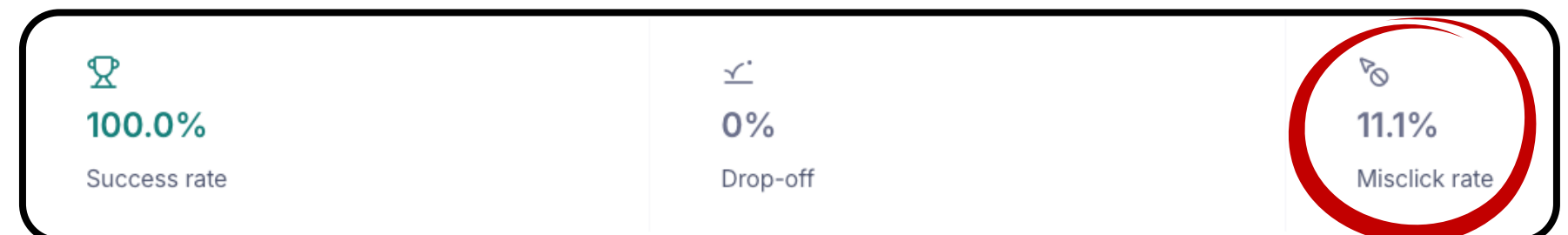
“Take a look at how many km you walked this week.”



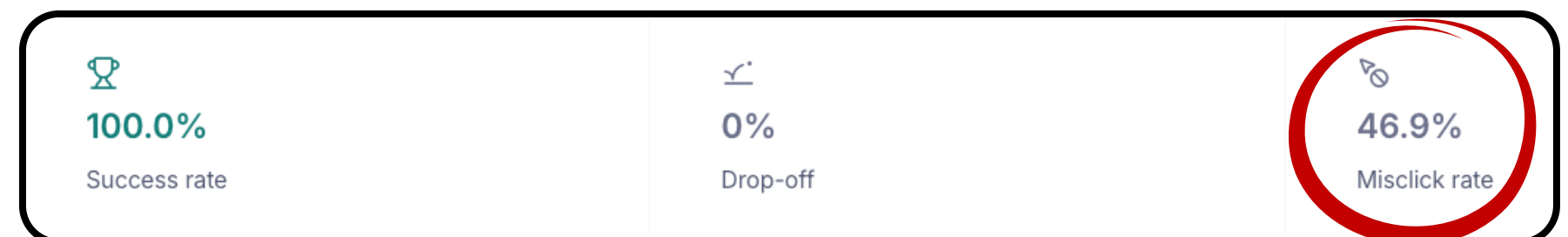
“Plan your next hike together with your hiking buddy.”



“You want to read a turtle-themed tale of Stanley Park.”

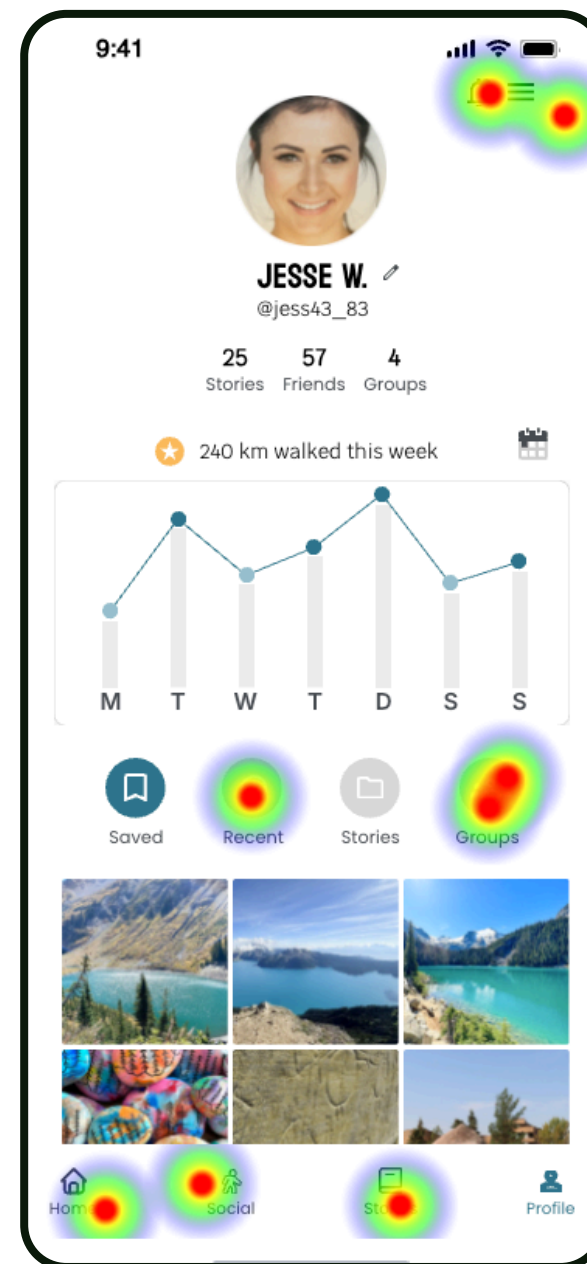
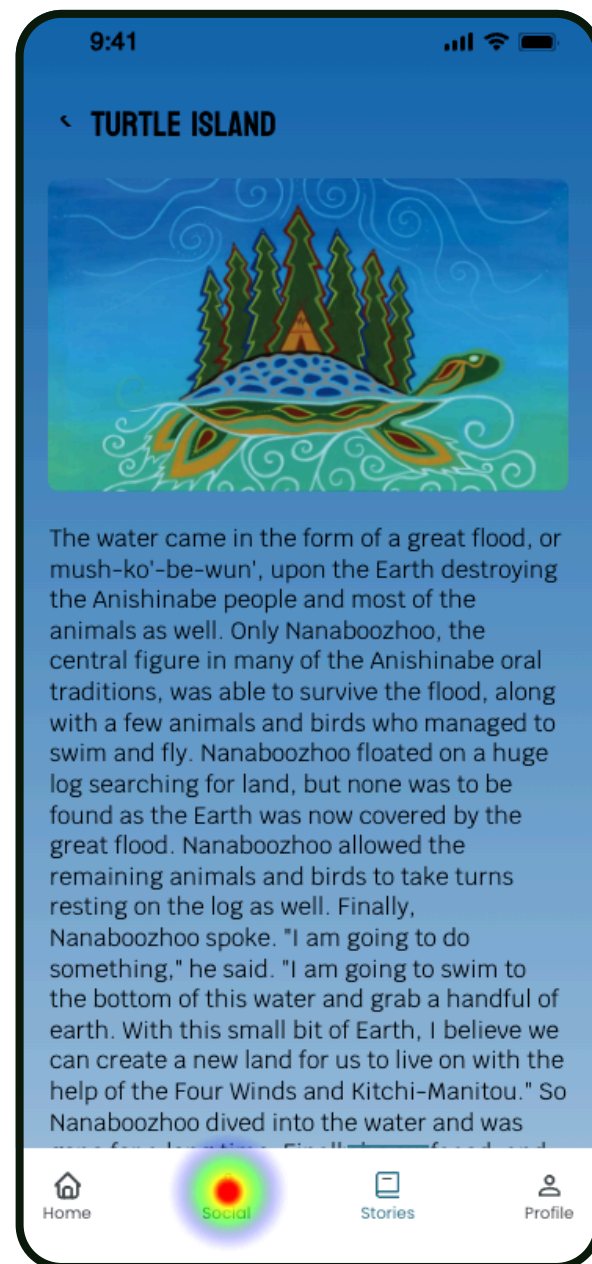
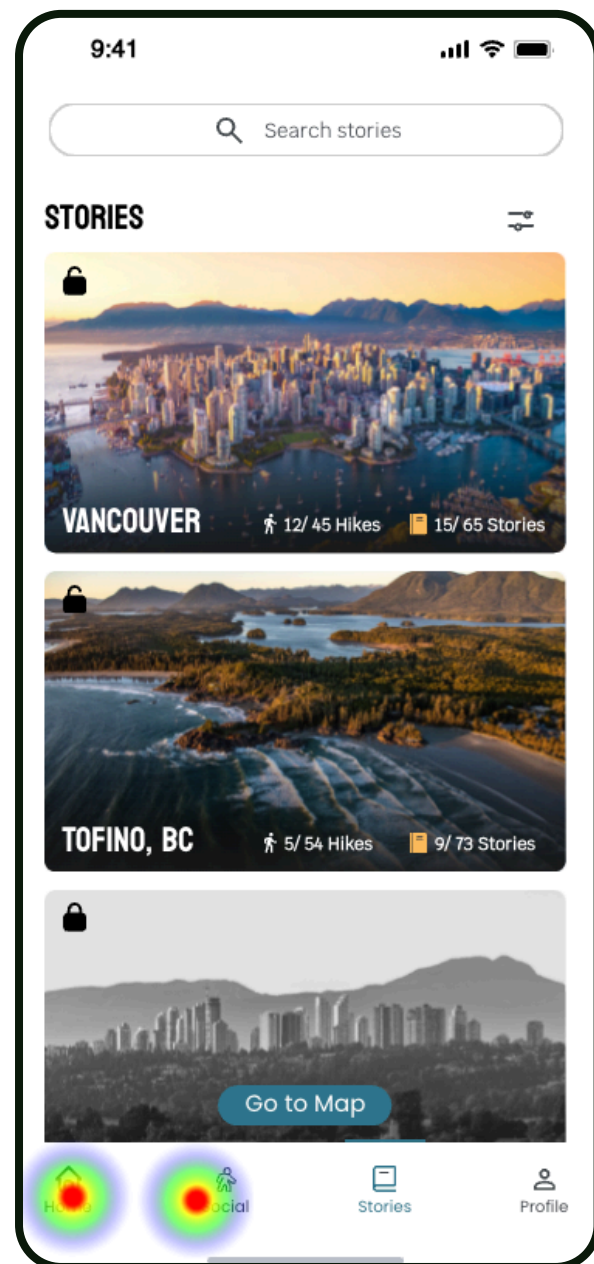


“Download the map for the Wayway trail.”



Each task had a 100% success rate of completing the tasks, but some users misclicked many times before completion. The app was functional, but the user interface was not optimal.

USER TESTING CONT.



HEATMAPS

Maze's heatmaps revealed that there was confusion surrounding the "social" item in the navigation bar.

Sometimes, users would tap "social" when they were trying to navigate to another page.

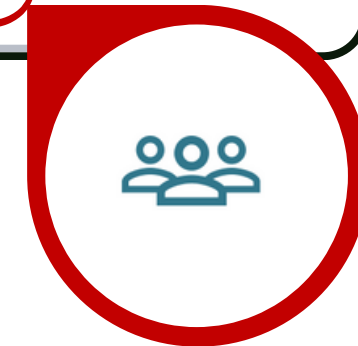
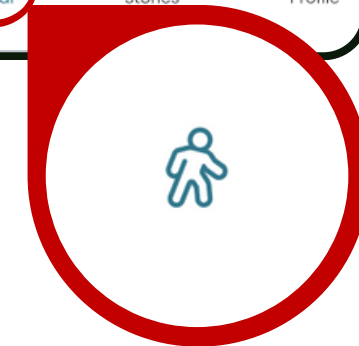
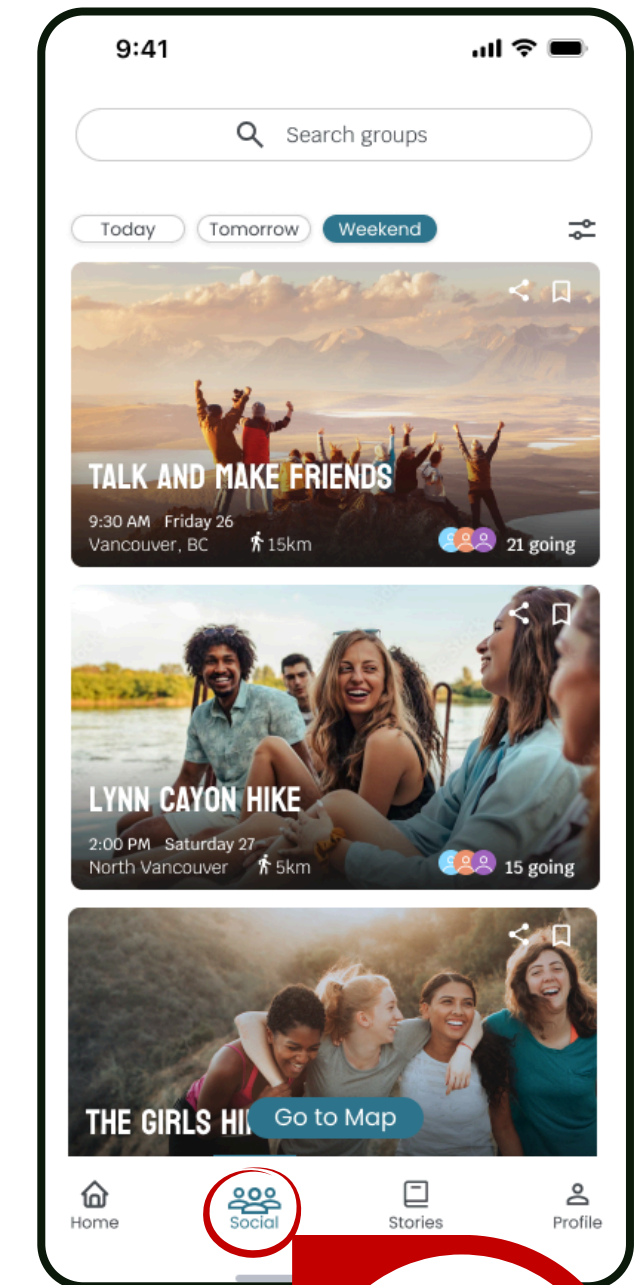
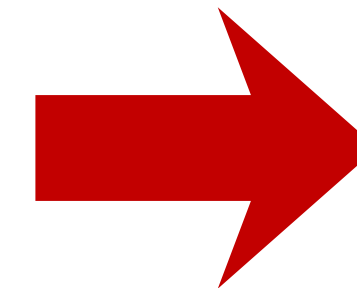
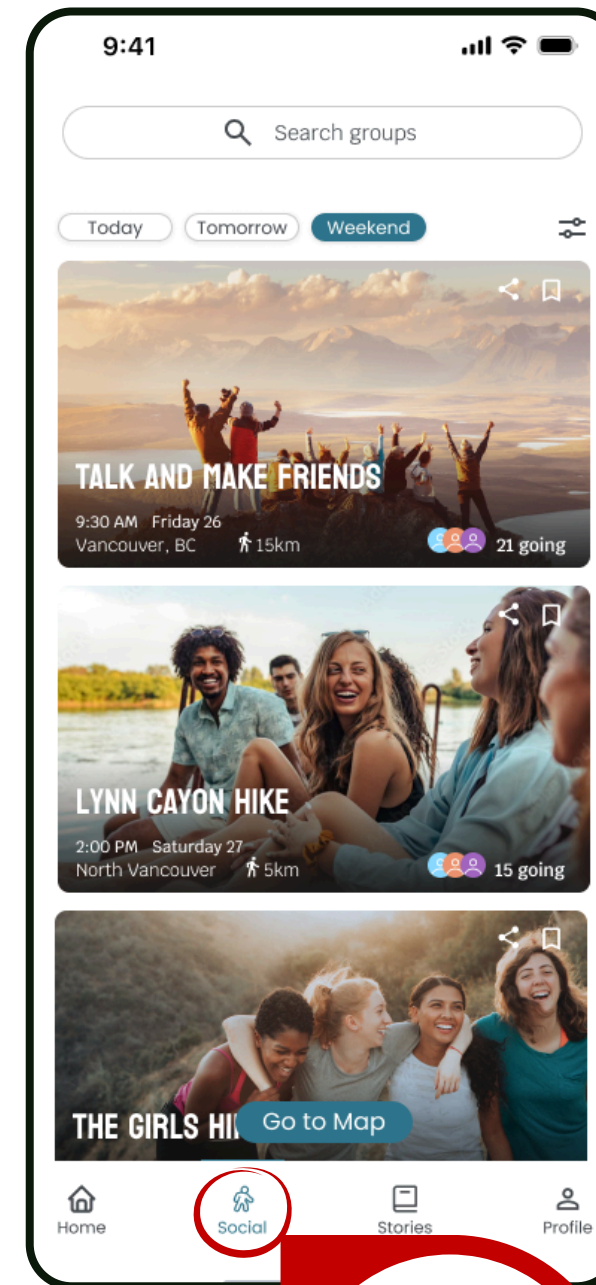
A other times, users would tap other places when they intended to navigate to the social page.

CHANGES

THE NAVIGATION BAR

Since most misclicks were because of users misunderstanding the “social” icon in the navigation bar. Although the word “social” is under the icon, some users click based on their interpretation of the icon before they process the matching written word.

The icon was initially a single walking person. Users were clicking thinking it meant “individual personal profile” or “hiking”. The new icon is multiple individuals together, not doing any physical activity.



DESIGN REFLECTION



FIGMA LINK

The design was shaped by our findings in the questionnaire and in the user testing. These insights guided the direction we wanted to take, helping us understand what users actually needed and expected. Based on this feedback, we refined our priorities, adjusted certain features, and focused on creating a solution that felt intuitive, relevant, and valuable for our target audience.

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THANK YOU

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