

GREAT BEAR FOUNDATION

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THE TASK

For this project, I was tasked with redesigning a nonprofit website of my choice. I chose to redesign The Great Bear Foundation's website, in order to give it a rejuvenated and welcoming visual style and tone that its current site lacks, bringing in new audiences and generations to the world of bear conservation.

BACKGROUND/CLIENT

The Great Bear Foundation was founded in 1981 with the goal of preserving the habitats and lifestyles bears around the globe. Their founder, Chuck Jonkel, was a pioneer in bear conservation and biology, and strived to create an organization that would carry on through the generations. His passion for his profession has led many different people to join him and Great Bear in the goal of keeping bears safe around the world. I wanted my design to honor the history of Great Bear, and respect the amount of work and dedication it took to create The Great Bear Foundation.

THE PROBLEM

While Great Bear is a passionate and devoted non-profit, their website lacks the visual strength to bring in new members and continue their projects. The website feels cluttered and outdated, pushing younger conservationists away and minimizing Great Bear's reach.

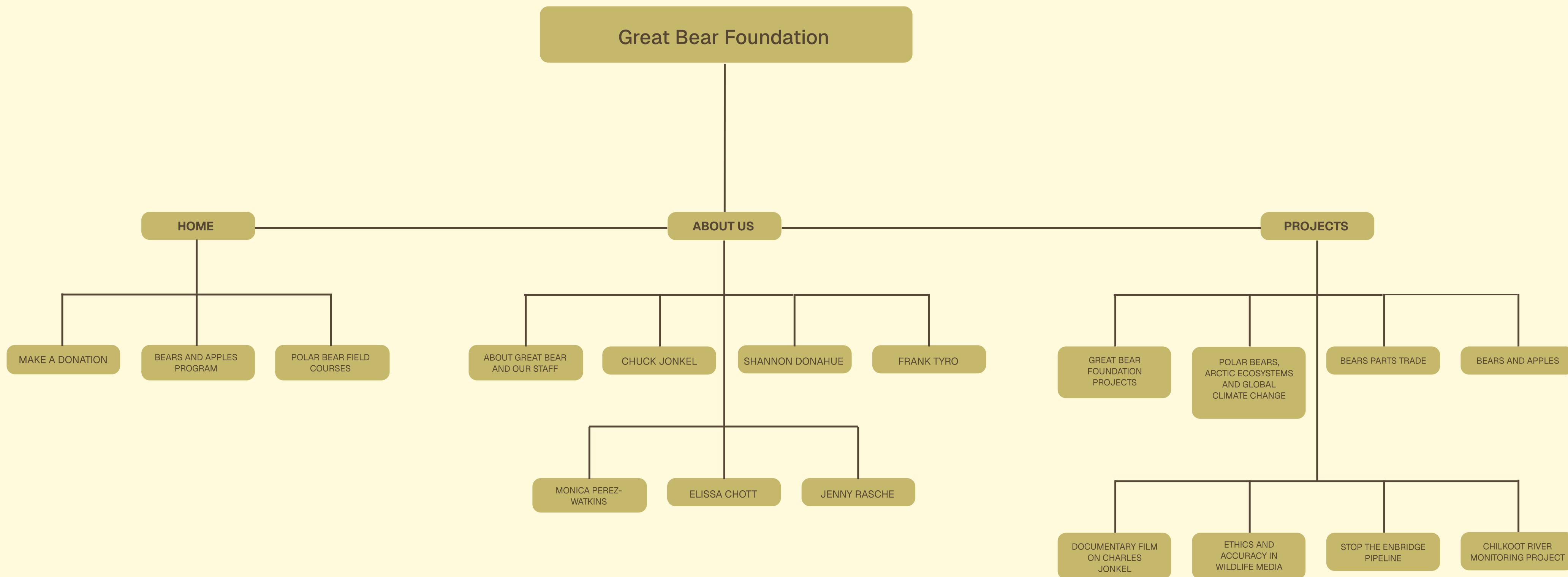
THE SOLUTION

The Great Bear Foundation needs a website that is captivating to new and regular visitors. They have a wide range of information and ways to engage with their non-profit, but visitors of the website feel lost and jaded when navigating the walls of text. My proposed solution is to highlight the informational and friendly nature of Great Bear with charming imagery and colors, while preserving the website's rich and passionate content.

PROCESS

In order to accurately redesign The Great Bear Foundation's website, I needed to discover what was already working, what needed to be changed, and what steps I should take to reach my proposed solution. This required me to look into the brand of Great Bear, and discover who the ideal audience should be and how to showcase the values and beliefs of The Great Bear Foundation.

SITE MAP



STRENGTHS

Determined tone

Great Bear is dedicated to their cause, and uses educated, informed diction to help visitors understand their purpose and goals.

Focus on informing

Great Bear's top priority is informing others, whether it be through their website information pages, field courses, education, or petitions.

Organized

The current website values a neatly organized informational structure that guides visitors through their site.

WEAKNESSES

Outdated design

Great bear currently has a design that feels visually old, it fails to grab visitors attention and often misleads visitors regarding the modernity of the brand.

Over saturated navigation

While the information is valuable on Great Bear's website, its difficult for visitors to decide where to go from the home page with the number of options available.

Lack of variation

A similar point to the outdated design, Great Bear's website is visually unengaging, and fails to keep visitor attention.

COMPETITION

americanbear.org

Hierarchy

The American Bear Association has a greater sense of hierarchy compared to Great Bear. Their pages contain hero images and more variation in text sizing and treatment.

Messaging

There is a distinct difference between the visual messaging of Great Bear and American Bear. The American Bear Association allows visitors more freedom in how they interact.

Content-heavy

Both American Bear and Great Bear have over saturated navigation and content that confuses and overwhelms visitors.

AUDIENCE

For this project, I determined that The Great Bear Foundation's audience is Millennial and Gen X conservationists and animal lovers living near natural bear habitats. While I still wanted to remain loyal to this audience, I hoped that with this redesign Great Bear's content could be more widely appealing to newer generations of conservationists in addition to the current audience. In order to design my prototype successfully with this in mind, I create both a positive and negative user persona to guide my process.



TYLER

Profile

Tyler is a 31 year old environmental scientist. He focuses heavily on habitat conservation in the northern Montana region, and loves being able to do field work out in the back country. He is an avid hiker, and enjoys taking his dog on walks and snowshoeing. Recently, Tyler has wanted to engage with wildlife preservation efforts in his free time. He hopes to find a nonprofit organization that will allow him to contribute to bear preservation and engage with local communities.

Goals

- Make a donation/become a member through Great Bear Foundation's website.
- Learn more about the various species of bears and their habitats, as well as what is threatening them.
- Feel welcomed and part of a community.
- Meet others interested in helping bears.

Needs

- Clean and concise navigation
- Community aspect
- Detailed information on bears
- Transparency about organization

Values & Motivations

Tyler is hoping to find a way to connect with the conservation community of northern Montana, and feel as though he is making a change. He is looking for a nonprofit that seems dedicated and transparent about their cause. As someone new to the world of bears, Tyler seeks to gain new knowledge, and hopes the nonprofit he chooses will provide him with what he needs to know without making him do his own research.

Problems

Right now, Tyler finds that other bear nonprofits on the web overwhelm him with new information and over saturated navigation. He doesn't feel like a member of a community when he clicks on these sites, and feels like they have a distant tone.

Information

Age: 31 years

Occupation: Environmental Scientist

Income: 97K

Gender: Male He/Him

Marital Status: Married

Location: Bozeman, MT



Information

Age: 64 years

Occupation: Retired

Income: 36K

Gender: Female She/Her

Marital Status: Widowed

Location: Victoria, BC

CHERYL

Profile

Cheryl is a 64 year old retiree. She is an avid bird watcher and loves to observe the deer and squirrels that visit her backyard. Recently, Cheryl has been getting into podcasts, and has listened to a few bear attack stories. Because of this, Cheryl is very concerned about the presence of bears in the woods behind her house, and how they might affect the animals she loves so dearly. Cheryl can't comprehend why anyone would want to preserve the lives of bears, and plans to avoid discussion of them until further notice.

Goals

- Contact Great Bear to ask them to remove their website.
- Join discussion threads online for anti-bear communities
- Block and report bear-related nonprofits and activism.

Needs

- Clear and visible navigation
- Easy to understand instructions and guidance

Values & Motivations

Cheryl is hoping to connect with other older people about her fear of large predators. She wants to have access to proper information about protecting herself but also wants to avoid sites and pages that speak of bears in a positive light.

Problems

Currently, Cheryl lives alone in a home by the woods. She is deeply afraid of the deer and small animals she feeds being predated on by large predators, like bears. Right now, she appreciates the simple and forward design of Great Bear's website, and hopes it continues to stay the same visually so she can continue to learn more about bears and how to avoid them.

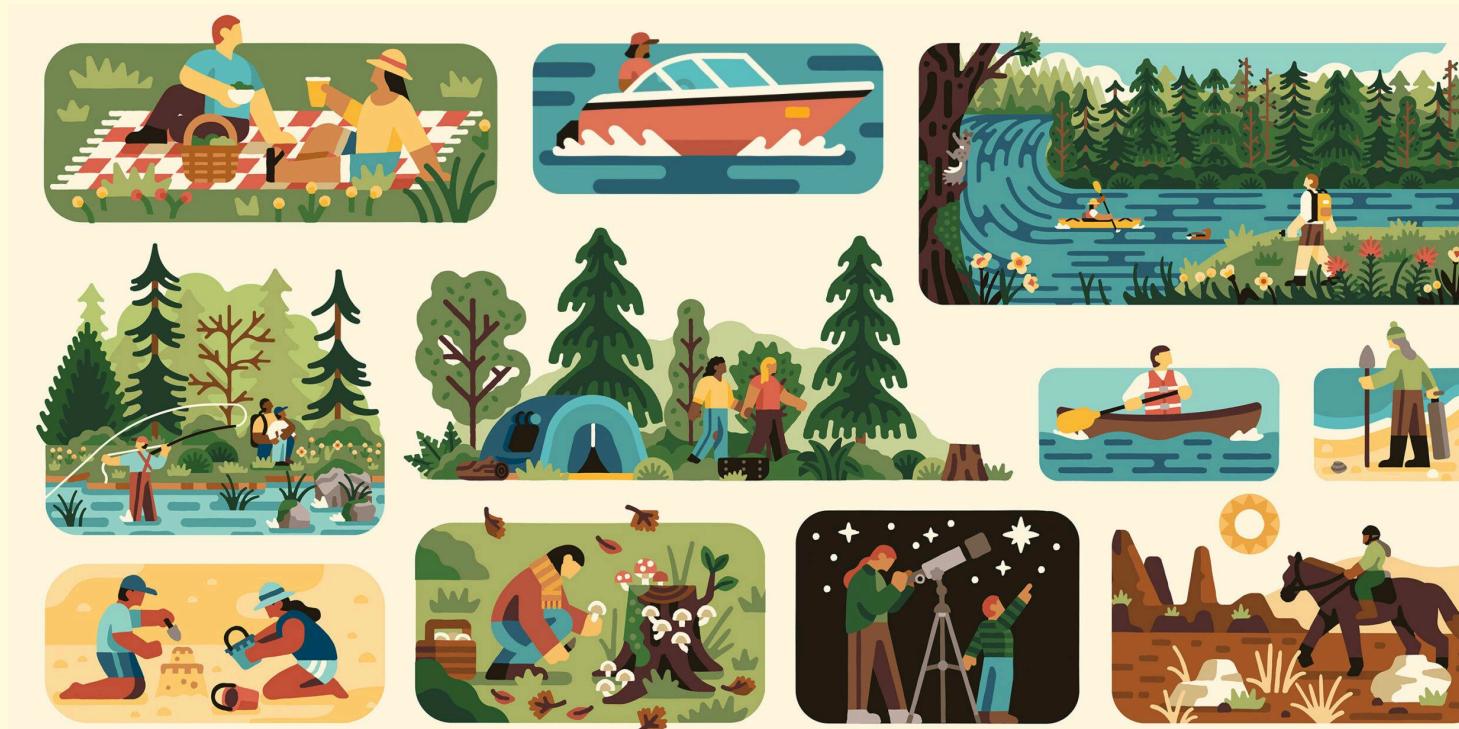
POSITIONING, MESSAGING & COMMUNICATION

The Great Bear Foundation falls on the smaller, less popular end of bear nonprofits. While it does get traffic and donations, it is much lower on the search page than its competitors and isn't as visually striking. They aim to be serious and informational in order to showcase the severity of bear preservation. There are opportunities to welcome new visitors to the site with a more friendly tone, and create an atmosphere that encourages donations and subscriptions. While Great Bear does work around the globe, they only communicate through their website and blog. If the main form of communication should be the website, it needs to be able to grab the readers attention.

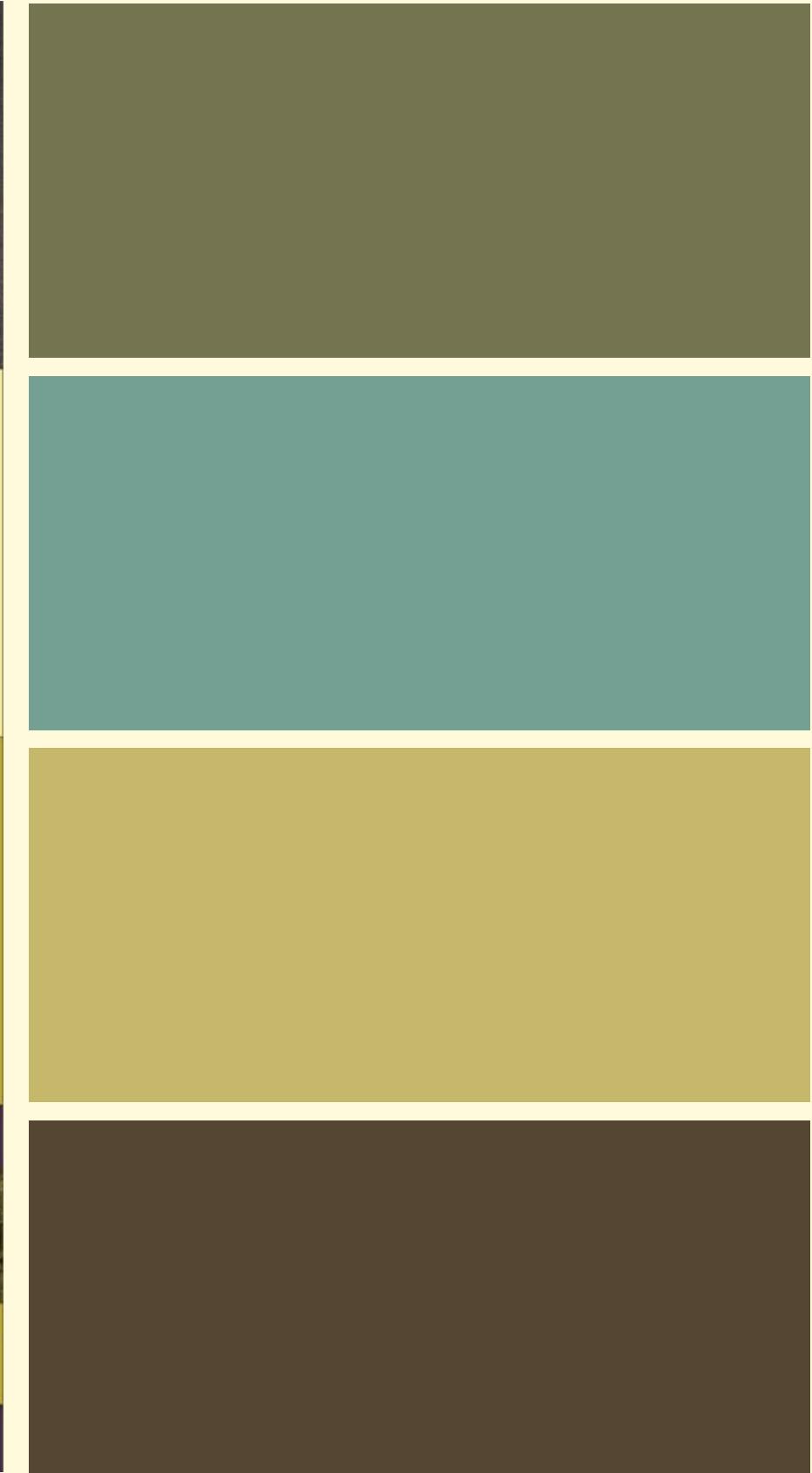
VISUAL DESIGN

In order to effectively redesign The Great Bear Foundation's website, I needed to use the research and analysis I conducted to determine the best possible navigation and visuals. I determined that Great Bear needed a more vibrant color palette, more engaging visuals such as fluid imagery and guided text, and a simplified navigation. To begin my visual design process, I started in Figma, creating and tweaking lo-fi wireframes. From there, I added colors, imagery, and text while making changes and adjustments that would become my hi-fi prototype.

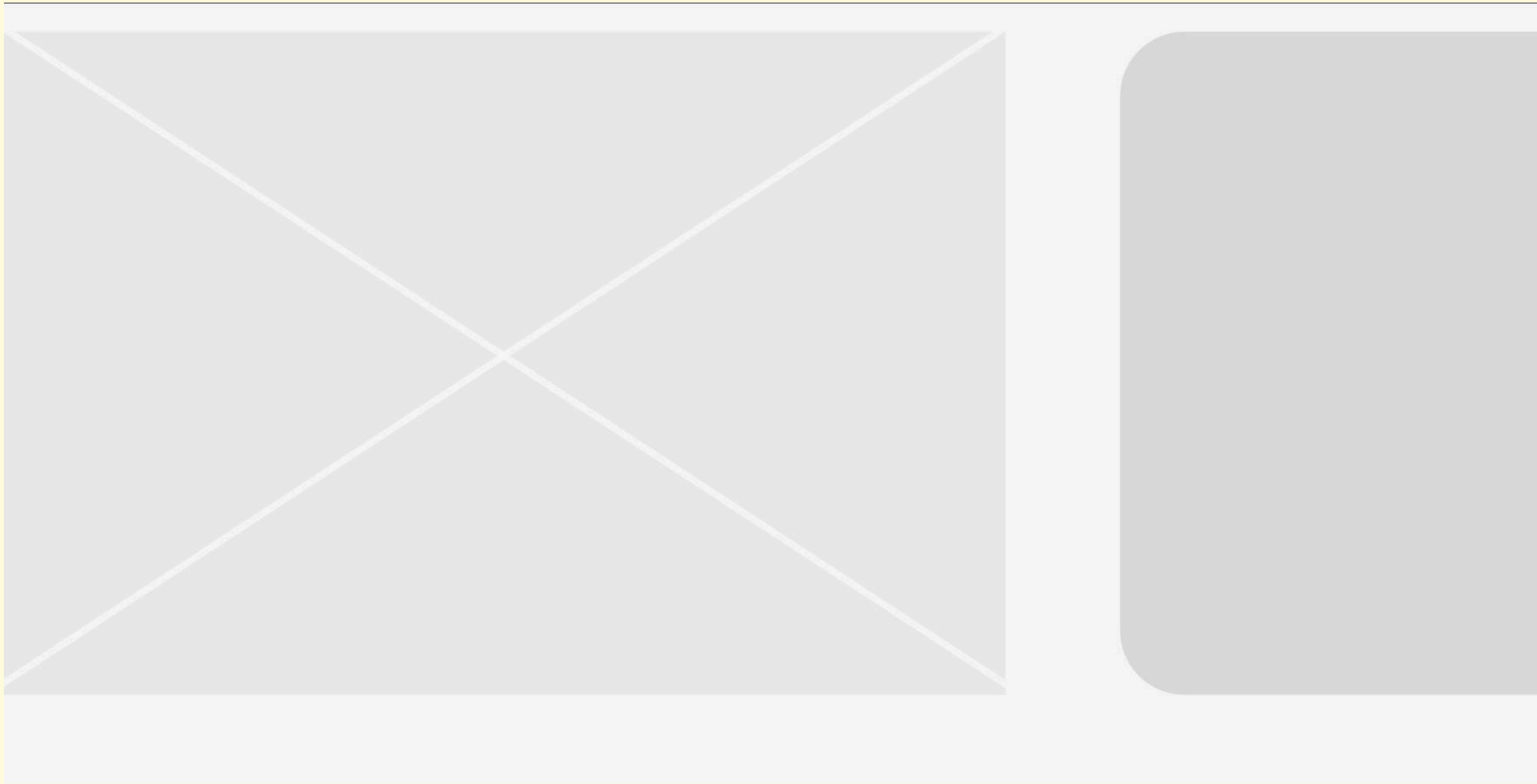
MOODBOARD



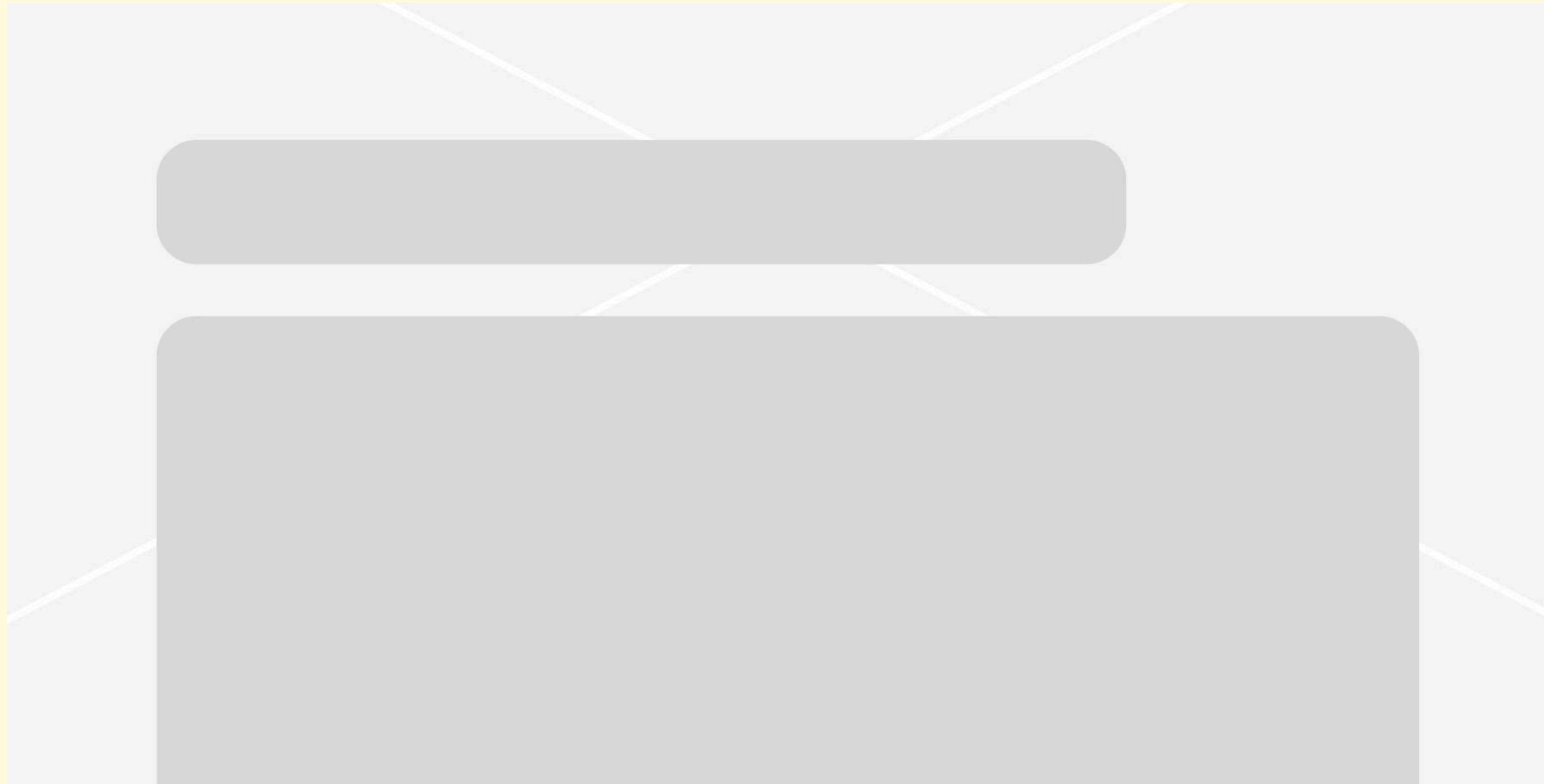
TYPEFACE
COLLECTION



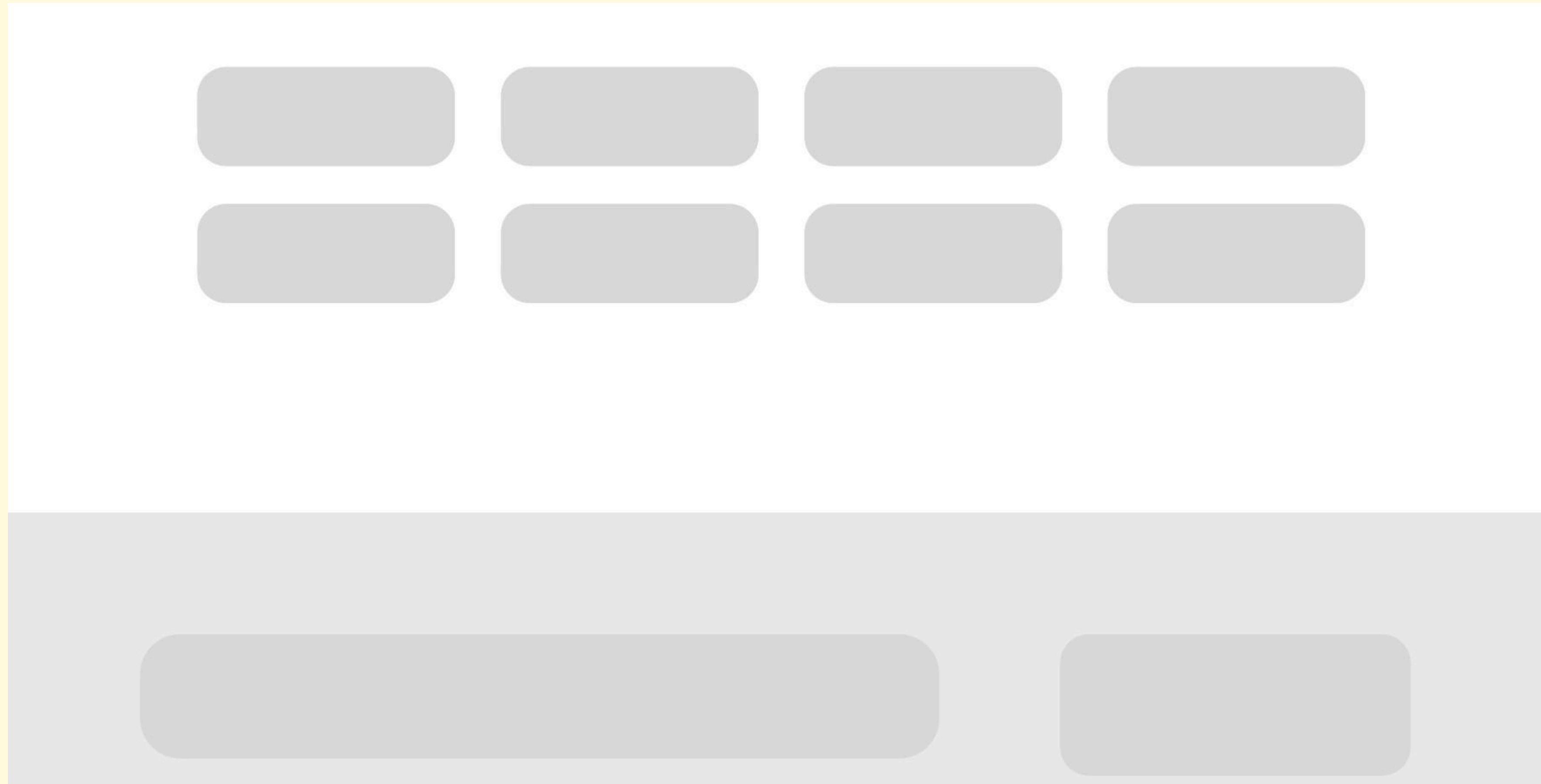
LO-FI WIREFRAMES - HOME



LO-FI WIREFRAMES - ABOUT



LO-FI WIREFRAMES - PROJECTS



KEY TAKEAWAYS

From my lo-fi wireframing usability testing and critique, I learned that my wireframes were visually overpowering. I realized that I was designing a desktop wireframe with mobile in mind, which led me to have oversized assets. I also discovered that my wireframes needed to have more condensed information, which led me to experiment with layouts much more when working on my hi-fi wireframes and prototype.

USABILITY TESTING

Shrink content

Following critique and usability testing, I determined that the content on my in-progress prototypes was oversized. To create a less jarring and overwhelming space for visitors, I reduced the size of my content and expanded the negative space.

Condense information

My in-progress prototype pages were long and monotonous, which made users feel jaded and uninterested in the content. To fix this, I condensed information and visuals to keep users entertained.

Attention to detail

I received overall feedback on the attention to detail in my designs. Following the usability testing, I fixed alignment issues and visual discrepancies.

OUTCOME

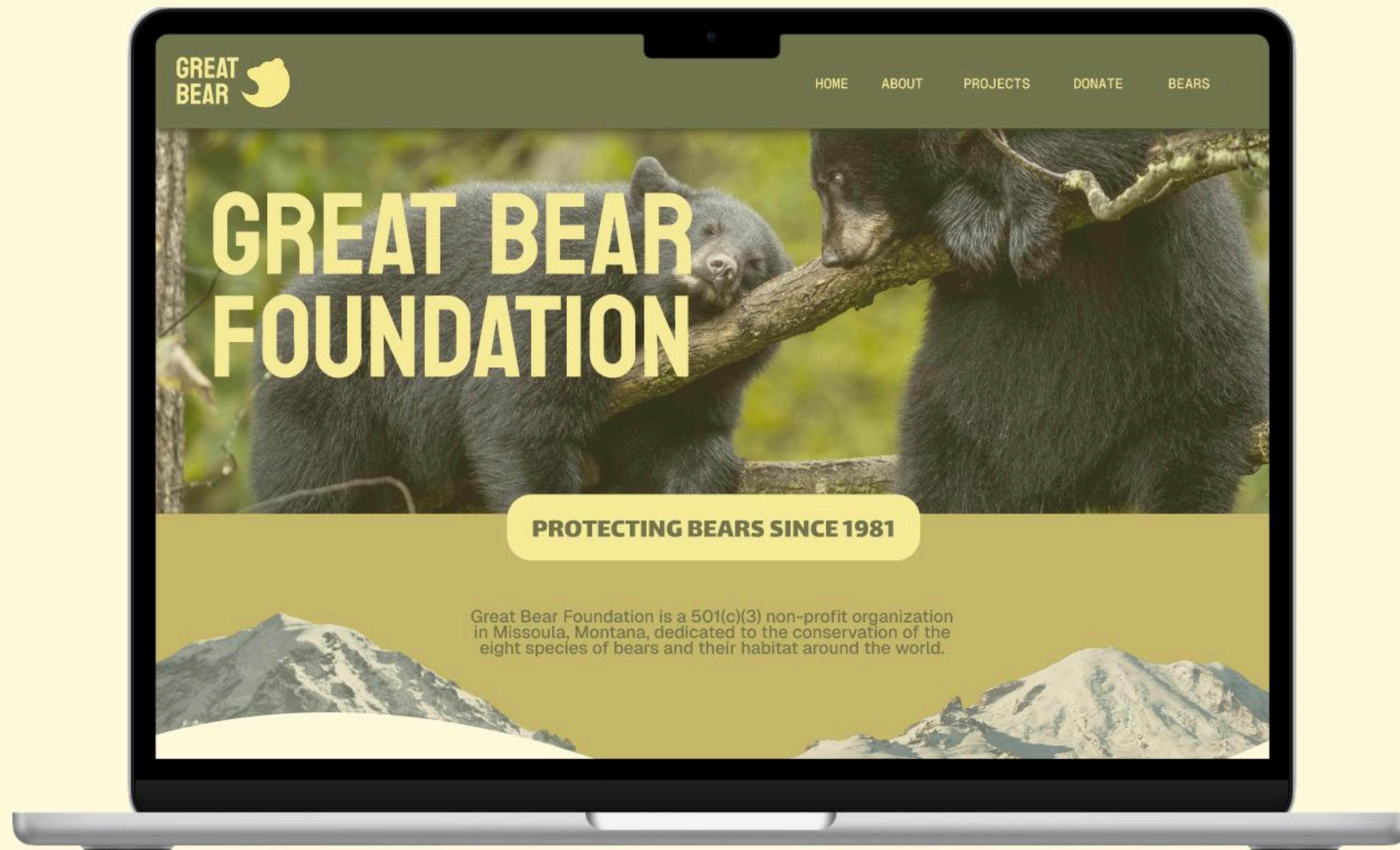
My hi-fi prototype combines the initial guidance I received from my research with the feedback I gained from critique and usability testing. It is visually engaging, with added imagery that puts bears in a positive light and emphasizes the goals and tone that Great Bear desires. My choice to have a green color palette puts the user in a calming, nature-oriented head space that encourages interaction.

Links:

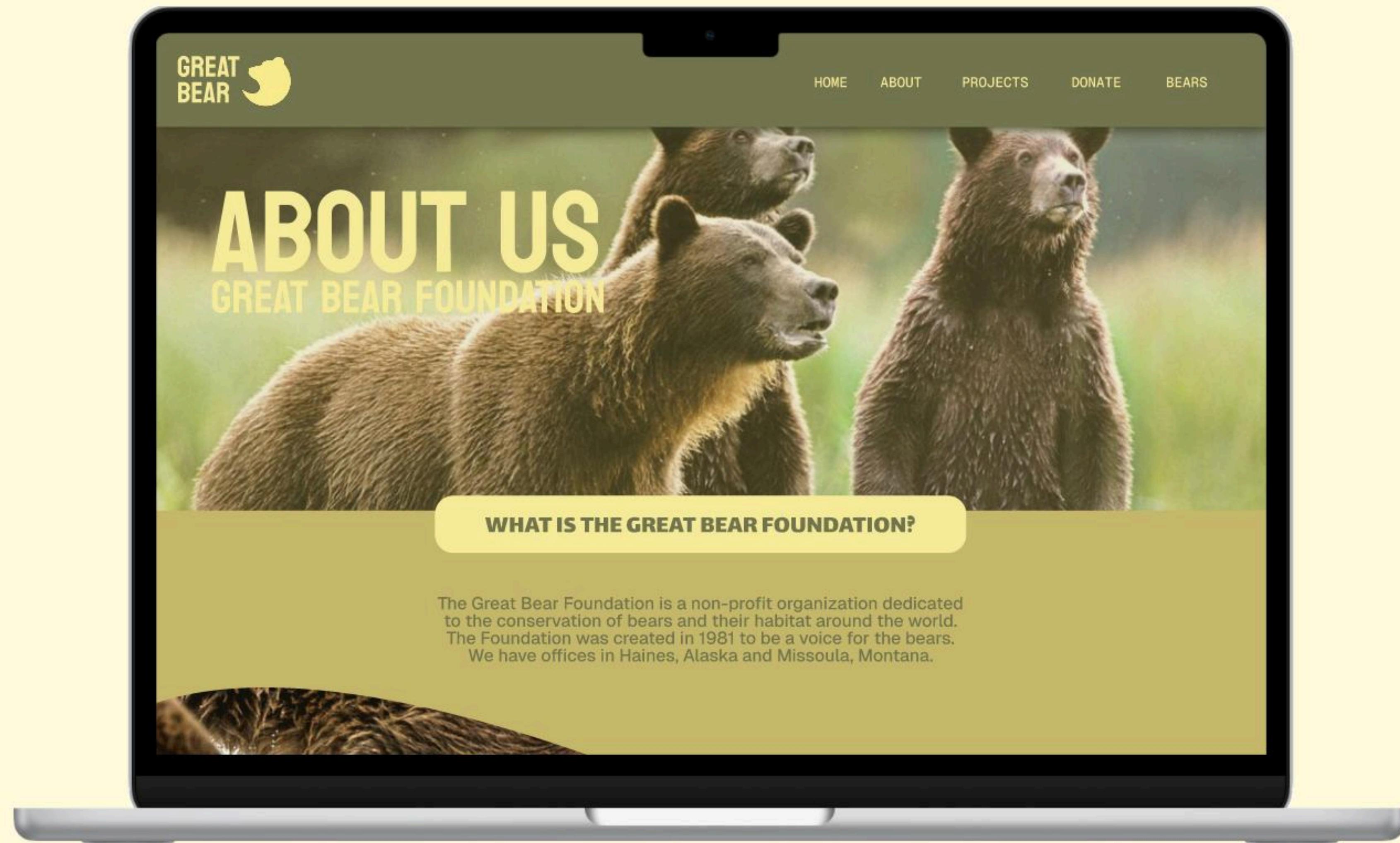
[Desktop prototype](#)

[Mobile prototype](#)

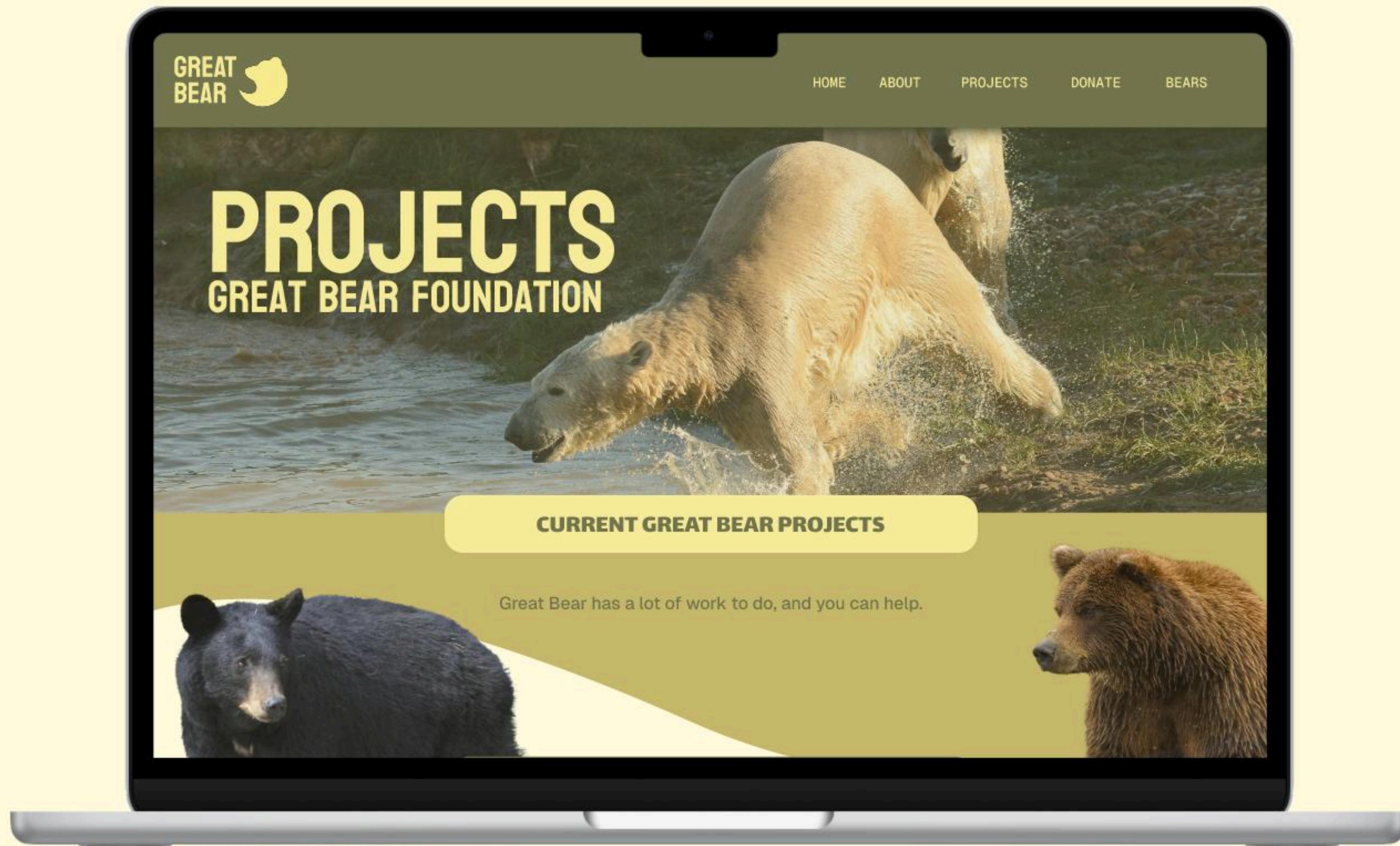
HI-FI WIREFRAMES - HOME



HI-FI WIREFRAMES - ABOUT



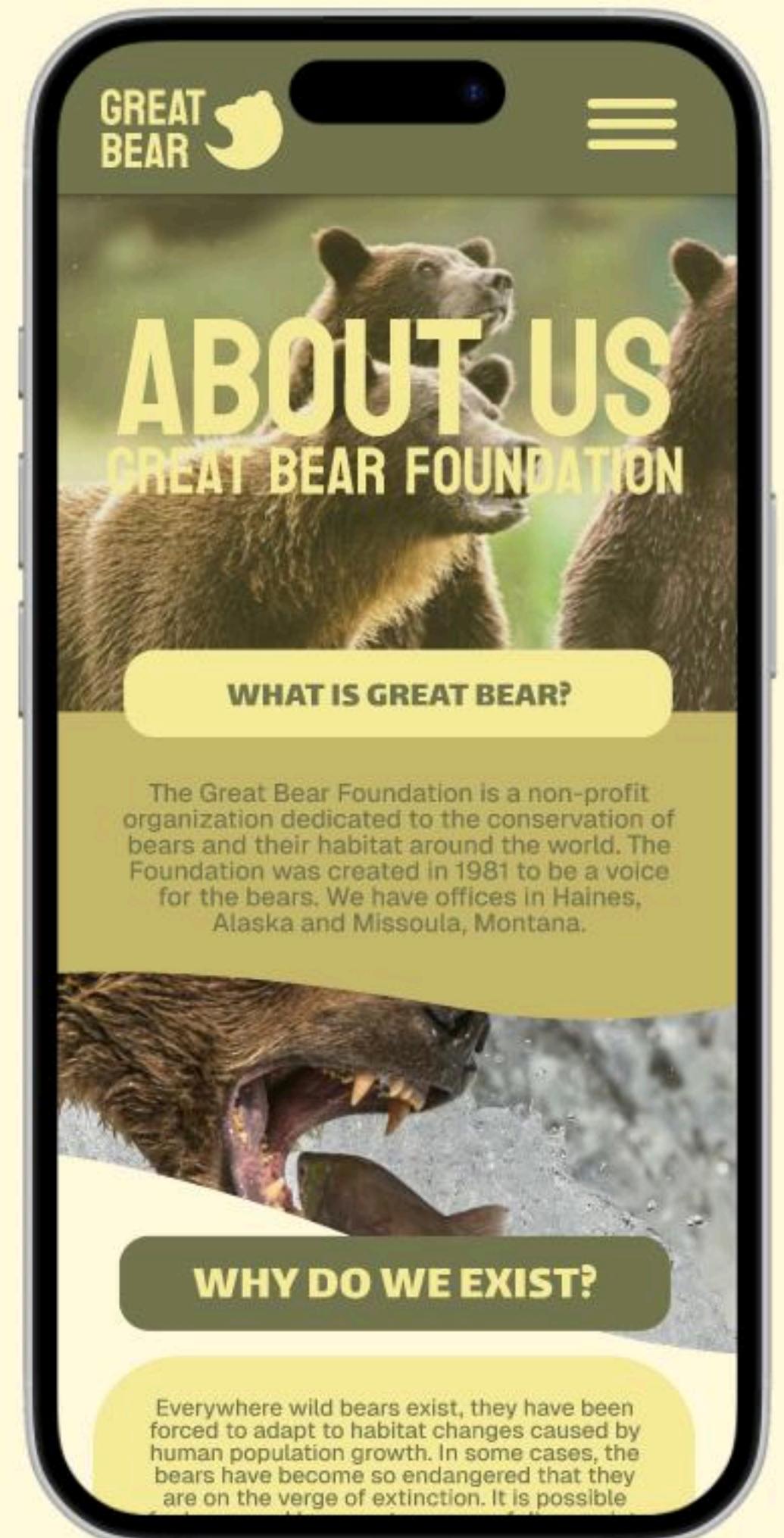
HI-FI WIREFRAMES - PROJECTS



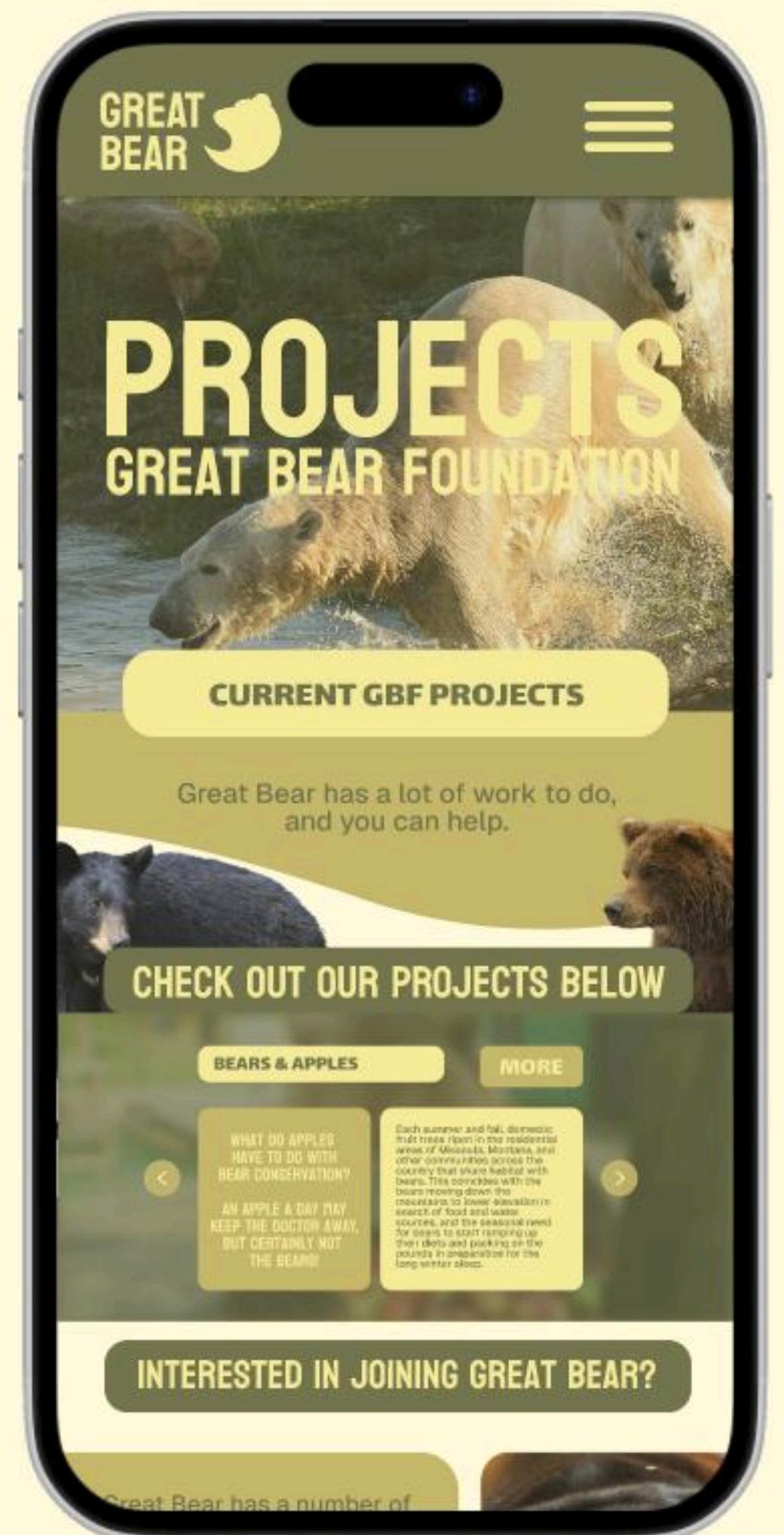
HI-FI WIREFRAMES - HOME



HI-FI WIREFRAMES - ABOUT



HI-FI WIREFRAMES - PROJECTS



CHALLENGES

Sizing

Throughout this project, I had a lot of roadblocks relating to the sizing of my desktop prototype, and struggled to design a layout that felt appropriate for desktop scrolling. To solve this, I deconstructed my assets and resized them, then reconstructed them while paying attention to the prototype and how it looked through the process.

Informational structure

At certain points in this project, I had trouble figuring out how to place the information on my pages. Great Bear has a lot of content, and I found it difficult at times to figure out how to make the information engaging and interesting, but not a wall of text.

Mental constraints

This was my first time designing hi-fi desktop wireframes, and I had a bit of a learning curve when figuring out how layouts worked, and what was necessary for a page, like a footer. I did a lot of browsing of other nonprofit websites in order to understand what my structure should include.

REFLECTIONS

Throughout this project, I faced a number of different challenges that gave me a different perspective on design. Overall, I found this project to be a very rewarding process that taught me a lot about research and development. My challenges during this project allowed me to effectively problem solve and redirect, and the experience of designing for both mobile and desktop taught me about maintaining a visual language.

THANK YOU (BEARY MUCH)

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