

portfolio review

UNDERSTANDING THE USER / VELA APP

BY: HILLARY NEAF

User Personas

DESIGN PERSONAS BASED ON USER RESEARCH



JAMES

44 years old

Married with 2 kids

Orlando, FL

IT Director at a University

Busy Working Dad loves the Outdoors

“ I'd like to go out on the lake without having to check so many different apps and websites for the weather information I need. ”

ABOUT

James is married with 2 young children. He works from home, but has a demanding and stressful job where he is on call 5 days a week. He likes to decompress by taking his family and friends out on his boat in the nearby lakes on the weekends. He loves the outdoors, is very tech savvy and an early adopter of new technology and apps. He is active on Facebook keeping up with family and friends.

GOALS & NEEDS

- He needs to know when the weather and water are right for going on the water.
- He wants to know which weekend is free for his family and friends.
- He wants to find the weather for his favorite boating spots quickly.

MOTIVATIONS

- James' main motivation is to have a carefree day on the water with his family and friends.
- He goes out on the water to take a break from his demanding job.
- He wants his kids to learn to swim and enjoy the same water sports he does.

FRUSTRATIONS

- James would like alerts to notify him when the weather is going to change and ruin his plans.
- He wants to get all the information in one app.
- He does not like when the forecast is not accurate and wants to notify the app and other boaters just like he does for drivers with Waze app.

DAILY ACTIVITIES

- Work from home and on call 6 days a week
- Attends 3-4 conference calls everyday
- Plays outdoors with his children after dinner.
- Plans his life using Google Calendar to keep up with family activities and obligations.
- Surfs the internet and uses Facebook on his mobile phone in his downtime to catch up with friends and out of state family.

TECHNOLOGY

LAPTOP



MOBILE



SOCIAL MEDIA



TECH SAVVY





KRISTIE

30 years old
Newlywed, no kids
Nashville, TN
College Professor teaching English
Career Driven Professional loves to travel and be active

“ I love using my time off to travel to warm places and do exciting water activities, but all the planning that goes into it is daunting. ”

ABOUT

Kristie is a newly wed at the start of her career as an English professor at a nearby university. She participates in two related scholarly committees. She catches up with friends and family on social media and enjoys dining out with her husband and friends. She's a planner, initiating most of her social outings. On weekends she enjoys hiking, going to local festivals and exploring her local community. She loves to travel with her friends to unforgettable destinations with fun active/water activities.

GOALS & NEEDS

- Kristie wants to find which water activities are popular at her travel destinations.
- She spends a lot of time researching vendors for group activities and equipment rental before traveling.
- She would like to see if the weather will cancel her plans as soon as possible so that she can make alternate plans on her vacation.

MOTIVATIONS

- Kristie wants to find the best water sport experiences available at her destination to have some great memories with her husband and friends.

FRUSTRATIONS

- Kristie likes the Google Weather app, but is frustrated that she can't set the 7 day forecast as the default view.
- Kristie loves sharing her water experiences with others, but at times forgets which spot she went to and when.
- She has a hard time trying to easily find the weather in apps that have ads integrated all over screen.

DAILY ACTIVITIES

- Teaches 3 courses per semester and serves on 2 committees.
- Spends her afternoons and early evenings grading student work and lesson planning.
- Active on Twitter sharing educational content and a personal Facebook account shared with close family and friends.

TECHNOLOGY

LAPTOP



MOBILE



SOCIAL MEDIA



TECH SAVVY



User Journey Maps

VISUALIZING THE USER PROCESS TO ACCOMPLISH A GOAL



44 years old, Married with 2 kids
IT Director at a University
Busy Working Dad loves the Outdoors
Boat owner goes out on local lakes on weekends

JAMES' JOURNEY MAP

TASKS

FIND NEARBY LAKES

- Open Vela app
- Search for lakes near my location
- Review list of lakes

OPPORTUNITIES

CHECK WEATHER AT LOCATIONS

- Select the first lake and look at weather forecast for this weekend
- Do the same for 2 other nearby lakes

COMPARE WEATHER

- Compare the weather forecasts for the 3 lakes

CONFIRM PLANS

- Of the lakes looked at, make plans to go on the one with the best weather
- Add "Lake Day" to his Google Calendar
- Confirm plans with his wife

There's 3 lakes I love to go out to every year because they're not too busy and great for families.

Hopeful, Curious

I wonder if it's warm enough yet to get into the water?

Anxious, Weary

I don't want to get all the way there with the whole family in tow and then have rain spoil our day.

Motivated

Great, found a day, now, to clear it with the wife!

Eager, Excited

- Search can default to the user's current location with a list of nearby lakes
- For large lakes (like the Great Lakes) break up locations by regions/cities

- Location pages can show the weather forecast, including details like lake temperature, height, photos, average temperatures, etc.
- Links to nearby lakes or locations can be included in location pages

- Allow users to save lakes/locations to a favorites section
- Show weather at a glance for the favorite lakes

- Allow the user to save the date/location as a lake day that they can set alerts for weather changes
- Have a Google Calendar integration that can add the lake day to their schedule
- Integrate with SMS, email or social media to invite family and friends to the lake day

SCENARIO

The weather is getting warmer so James would like to find the best lake to go out on the water this weekend with his family. There are several nearby lakes he enjoys, so he'd like to find the one that has the warmest water and ideal weather to make plans.



30 years old, Newlywed, No kids
College Professor teaching English
Career Driven Professional loves to travel and be active
Plans fun vacations with her friends and husband

KRISTIE'S JOURNEY MAP



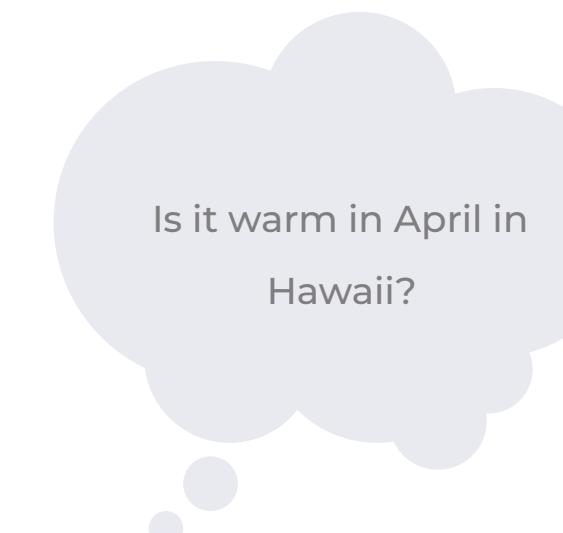
TASKS

- Open Vela app
- Search for Maui



Optimistic

- Review Maui location page's monthly weather averages for air and water temperatures, etc.



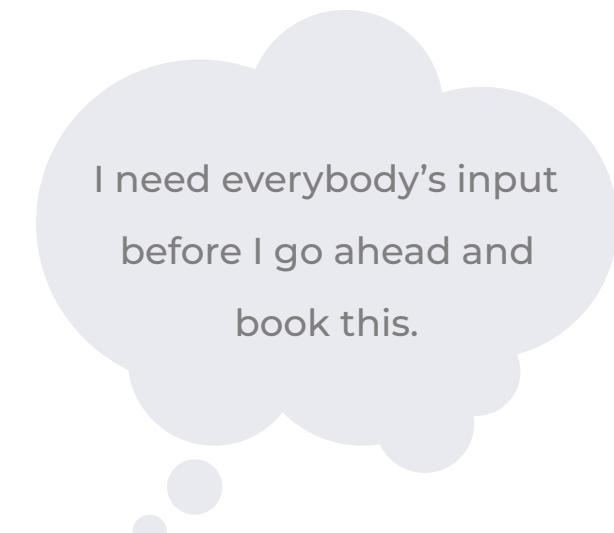
Curious, concerned

- Look at popular water activities on the Maui Location page
- Select a water activity and compare a list of vendors by ratings and reviews



Pressured, Overwhelmed

- Select a vendor
- Share vendor and activity with friends to confirm they are on board
- Book the activity
- Add activity to personal schedule



Accomplished

OPPORTUNITIES

- Search can autocomplete based on user typing for difficult to spell destinations
- Search can have "Did you mean ___?" for commonly misspelled destinations

- Location pages should include water and air temperatures

- Allow for featured ads of vendors to support the application
- Source vendors, ratings and reviews from Google
- Allow filtering on the vendor list by rating and more

- Integrate with SMS, Email or social media to share a vendor with friends
- Have a Google Calendar or Google Trips integration that can add the water activity to their plans

SCENARIO

Kristie is making plans to go to Maui, Hawaii with her husband and another couple on their spring break. She'd like to plan a fun water activity for the group to participate in, but is not sure what water sports are popular there and what the weather will be like in April.

User Flows

MAPPING OUT KEY USER FLOWS THROUGH THE APP



VELA APP

User Flow 1

JAMES

- 44 years old, Married with 2 kids
- IT Director at a University
- Busy Working Dad loves the Outdoors
- Very tech savvy, plans everything digitally. Needs a break from stressful job, wants everything to be carefree. Enjoy time with his family.

SCENARIO

James downloaded the Vela app in anticipation of going to the lake regularly this summer. He regularly goes to three local family-friendly lakes and would like to quickly check the weather at these lakes as needed.

OBJECTIVE

James wants to add his preferred lakes to a favorites list so that he can quickly access their weather in the future.

TASK FLOW

Entry Point - Onboarding Screen

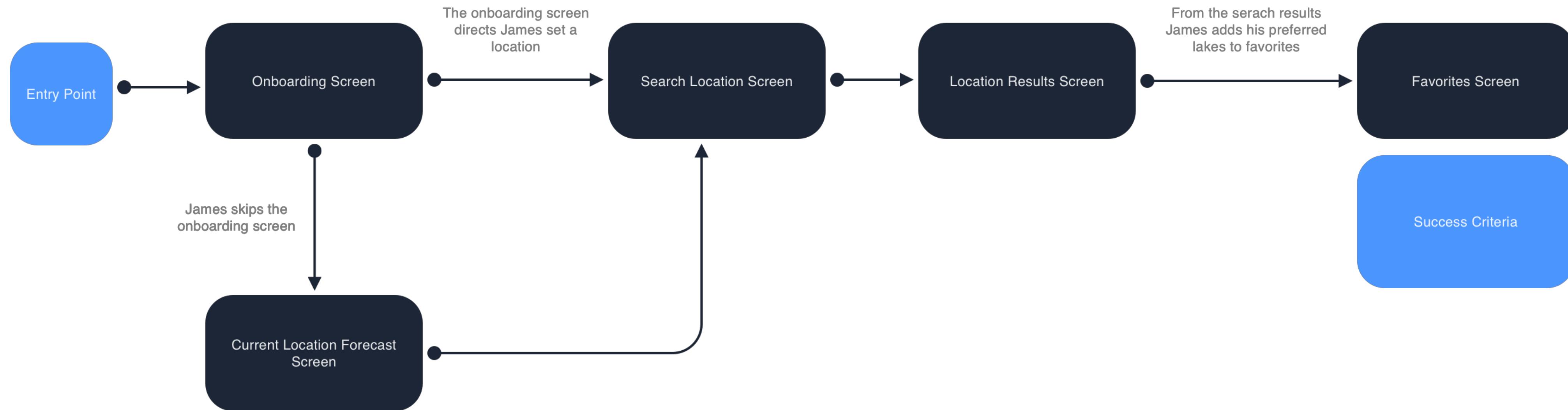
1. Find a way to search for nearby lakes
2. Search for nearby lakes that he frequents
3. Add 3 of his preferred lakes to favorites

Success Criteria - Successfully add 3 of his preferred nearby lakes to his favorites list.

User Flow 1



JAMES





VELA APP

User Flow 2

JAMES

- 44 years old, Married with 2 kids
- IT Director at a University
- Busy Working Dad loves the Outdoors
- Very tech savvy, plans everything digitally. Needs a break from stressful job, wants everything to be carefree. Enjoy time with his family.

SCENARIO

James has been using the Vela app and has his favorite lakes added to his Favorites list. He checked his schedule and this Saturday he and his family have no plans. He'd like to get out on the water if possible. He wants to check the weather at his 3 favorite lakes.

OBJECTIVE

James wants to check the weather at his 3 favorite lakes so that he can go on the lake with the best weather his family on Saturday.

TASK FLOW

Entry Point - Home Screen

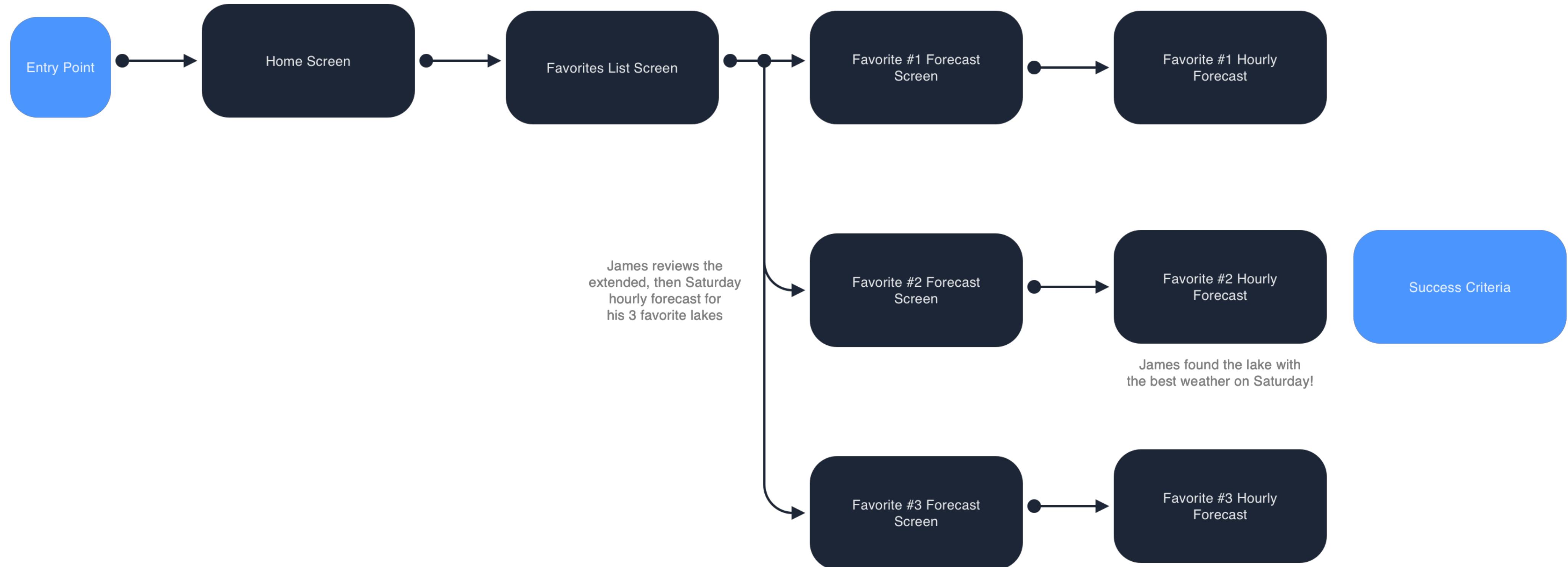
1. Find list of favorite lakes
2. Look at Saturday hourly forecast for all 3 lakes
3. Select lake with the best weather

Success Criteria - James selects the lake with the best weather on Saturday.

User Flow 2



JAMES





VELA APP

User Flow 3

KRISTIE

- 30 years old,
Newlywed, No kids
- Although she loves to
plan, she is busy as a
college professor
- She uses technology
regularly in her
career, but gets
frustrated with
inefficiencies in apps
- Enjoys outdoors and
exploring/traveling
with friends.

SCENARIO

Kristie will be going to Maui for spring break with her friends and heard Maui has a lot of water activities to choose from and wants to see what is popular.

OBJECTIVE

Kristie wants to find out which water activities are popular in Maui.

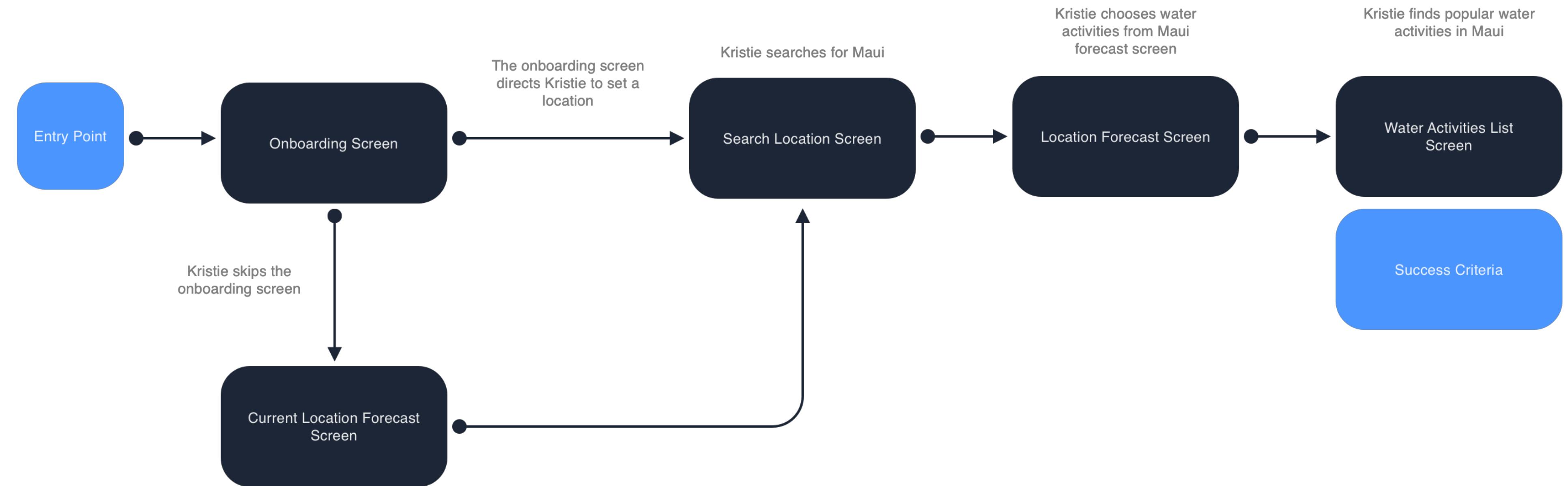
TASK FLOW

Entry Point - Onboarding Screen

1. Find a way to search for locations
2. Search for Maui
3. Find popular water activities in Maui

Success Criteria - Kristie finds popular water activities in Maui

User Flow 3



KRISTIE

Mobile First Design Plan

MAPPING OUT KEY USER FLOWS THROUGH THE APP

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| FUNCTION | CONTENT TYPE | FOR PERSONA | NOTES |
|----------------------------|---------------------|----------------|---|
| Onboarding Slides | Text, images | James, Kristie | James could use this to customize his layout by his preferred water sports, Kristie could use this to quickly get started |
| Search Location | Text | James, Kristie | Both personas would benefit from search by city and/or water body name, Offer GPS "locate me" |
| Home Screen | Text, photos, icons | James, Kristie | Personas should clearly see their current weather in a quick and easy way without ads interfering, A photo and Icons can help convey the weather at a glance |
| Favorites section | Text, Icons | James, Kristie | James would benefit from listing his favorite local areas, Kristie would benefit from saving the location of her next trip |
| Forecast screen categories | Text, icons, charts | James, Kristie | Personas would benefit from the forecast being separated into categories of weather conditions so that they can easily find/see them without having to go to other pages |
| Extended Forecast | Text, Icons | James, Kristie | Both personas would use extended forecasts for planning purposes, next 3 days and then link to go further into the future |
| Hourly Forecast | Text, chart, icons | James, Kristie | Both personas would benefit from a visual hourly forecast of different conditions when they check the weather on the day of their activity, split conditions to separate charts |
| Customize Forecasts | Text | James | James regularly likes to wakeboard, he should be able to customize the app to always shows conditions related to this in forecasts |
| Layout Settings | Text | Kristie | Allowing Kristie to change layout of the home screen is useful |
| Monthly Averages | Text, chart, icons | Kristie | Kristie would benefit in seeing monthly average weather conditions when planning where she will take her next trip |
| Popular Watersports | Text, Icons | Kristie | Kristie would benefit in seeing which water sports are popular at a glance at her vacation destinations, Icons can depict this effectively where space is limited |

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| FUNCTION | CONTENT TYPE | FOR PERSONA | NOTES |
|-------------------------|------------------|----------------|--|
| Map View | Map, Text, Icons | James, Kristie | Both personas would benefit in seeing the weather in a map view, show the map cropped with option to expand to full size |
| Weather change alerts | Text | James, Kristie | Both personas could set weather alerts to be notified when sudden weather changes affect their plans |
| Plan/Save Water Trips | Icons, Text | James, Kristie | James could use this to plan his next outing and get alerts of weather changes, Kristie could use this to keep track of vacation spots and what she did, list view options and filtering |
| Crowd Sourced Forecast | Text | James | James would love to share the most accurate forecast data with the community |
| Share Location/Forecast | Text | James, Kristie | Both personas would benefit from this as they are active on social media and tech savvy, send a screenshot of the weather with link to live weather forecast |
| Water Conditions | Text | James, Kristie | Both personas need water conditions from the app, including temperature, levels, waves, swells, etc. |
| Calendar integration | Text | James | James could align the weather for going on the water with his busy work and family life |

Personas

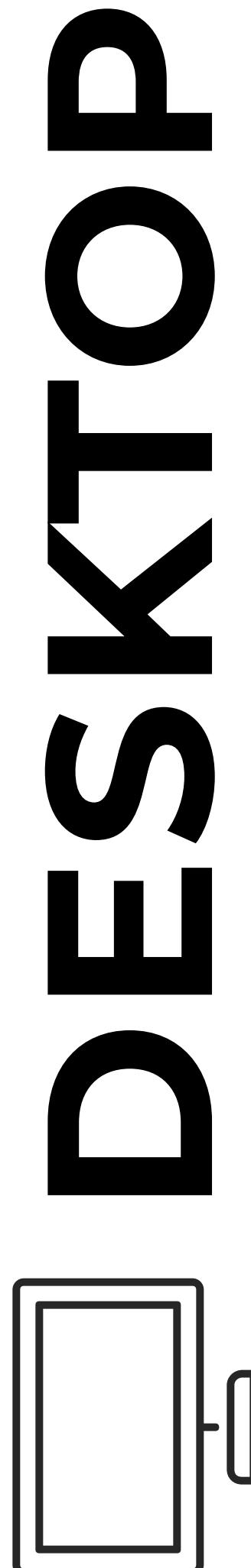
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|----------------------------|---------------------|----------------|--|
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| Favorites section | Text, Icons | James, Kristie | James would benefit from listing his favorite local areas, Kristie would benefit from saving the location of her next trip, The current temperatures for some of the favorite locations can be on the home screen |
| Forecast screen categories | Text, icons, charts | James, Kristie | Personas would benefit from the forecast being separated into categories of weather conditions so that they can easily find/see them without having to go to other pages, This can be multiple columns on a tablet |
| Extended Forecast | Text, Icons | James, Kristie | Both personas would use extended forecasts for planning purposes, timeline users can swipe through into the future |
| Hourly Forecast | Text, chart, icons | James, Kristie | Both personas would benefit from a visual hourly forecast of different conditions when they check the weather on the day of their activity, overlay conditions on a chart with option to show/hide each one |
| Customize Forecasts | Text | James | James regularly likes to wakeboard, he should be able to customize the app to always shows conditions related to this in forecasts |
| Layout Settings | Text | Kristie | Allowing Kristie to change layout of the home screen is useful |
| Monthly Averages | Text, chart, icons | Kristie | Kristie would benefit in seeing monthly average weather conditions when planning where she will take her next trip, can show all 12 months for tablet, add icons for water sport seasons |
| Popular Watersports | Text, Icons | Kristie | Kristie would benefit in seeing which water sports are popular at a glance at her vacation destinations, Photos for the water sports to create a more visually rich experience |

Feature Table

| FUNCTION | CONTENT TYPE | FOR PERSONA | NOTES |
|-------------------------|------------------|----------------|--|
| Map View | Map, Text, Icons | James, Kristie | Both personas would benefit in seeing the weather in a map view, show the map larger than mobile with option to expand full size or rotate to landscape view |
| Weather change alerts | Text | James, Kristie | Both personas could set weather alerts to be notified when sudden weather changes affect their plans |
| Plan/Save Water Trips | Icons, Text | James, Kristie | James could use this to plan his next outing and get alerts of weather changes, Kristie could use this to keep track of vacation spots and what she did, calendar view or list view with filtering |
| Crowd Sourced Forecast | Text | James | James would love to share the most accurate forecast data with the community |
| Share Location/Forecast | Text, Image | James, Kristie | Both personas would benefit from this as they are active on social media and tech savvy, send a screenshot of the weather with link to live weather forecast |
| Water Conditions | Text | James, Kristie | Both personas need water conditions from the app, including temperature, levels, waves, swells, etc. |
| Calendar integration | Text | James | James could align the weather for going on the water with his busy work and family life |

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| FUNCTION | CONTENT TYPE | FOR PERSONA | NOTES |
|----------------------------|---------------------|----------------|--|
| Search Location | Text | James, Kristie | Both personas would benefit from search by city and/or water body name, Offer "Use Location" from browser |
| Home Screen | Text, photos, icons | James, Kristie | Personas should clearly see their current weather in a quick and easy way without ads interfering, A photo and Icons can help convey the weather at a glance |
| Favorites section | Text, Icons | James, Kristie | James would benefit from listing his favorite local areas, Kristie would benefit from saving the location of her next trip, The current temperatures for some of the favorite locations can be on the home screen |
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| Extended Forecast | Text, Icons | James, Kristie | Both personas would use extended forecasts for planning purposes, next 7 days and then link to go further into the future |
| Hourly Forecast | Text, chart, icons | James, Kristie | Both personas would benefit from a visual hourly forecast of different conditions when they check the weather on the day of their activity, overlay conditions on a timeline with option to show/hide each one, on hover show the conditions for that time |
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| Popular Watersports | Text, Icons | Kristie | Kristie would benefit in seeing which water sports are popular at a glance at her vacation destinations, Photos for the water sports to create a more visually rich experience |



FUNCTION CONTENT TYPE FOR PERSONA NOTES

| | | | |
|-------------------------|------------------|----------------|--|
| Map View | Map, Text, Icons | James, Kristie | Both personas would benefit in seeing the weather in a map view, map can be full width of browser and filter to show different conditions |
| Weather change alerts | Text | James, Kristie | Both personas could set weather alerts to be notified when sudden weather changes affect their plans |
| Plan/Save Water Trips | Icons, Text | James, Kristie | James could use this to plan his next outing, Kristie could use this to keep track of vacation spots and what she did, calendar view or list view options with filtering |
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