Team Members: Lin Huang, Sophia Gao, Isabella Lee, Lucian Li

Team Name: Let's Touch Grass

Prompt 4: Outdoor Recreation and Engaging with the Natural Ecologies of Southern California

Abstract

Our team is dedicated to enhancing the connection between UCLA students and the natural environment through increasing access to outdoor recreation opportunities in Los Angeles and Southern California. We are committed to addressing challenges that students currently face when seeking to immerse themselves in nature and outdoor recreational/volunteer activities. **Our primary focus is to offer convenient tools and a platform that facilitates connections among students interested in outdoor recreational activities or volunteering opportunities, which we hope will create lasting relationships between nature, physical activities, and community service.** Some design problems and barriers we see include methods of enabling students to pursue outdoor activities (i.e. transportation), access to gear and equipment, finding peers and groups to do activities with, all while fostering learning and appreciation of nature in an engaging manner. We will revisit these needs later throughout our design process to ensure that we are still aligned with our primary focus.

We have come up with a few initial ideas in order to solve our design problems. First, we want to be able to host groups on our platform so that students can easily search for and join in to participate in activities with peers. A feature that can locate the user or accepts user input for a specific location may be utilized to show and connect to other users, find local natural ecologies, and/or suggest outdoor recreational opportunities that are nearby. Second, we aspire to establish partnerships with local museums, community groups, and parks to foster societal and educational development. This will allow us to gain access to educational or material resources that our team can share with users more conveniently. Finally, we hope to work with organizations and student clubs on campus to host events like beach clean-ups and hikes, which could also help students find and join communities of interest. This would help grow the organizations on campus, while also having students be able to engage in and support the purposes of these groups.

<u>**Plan**</u>

Project Schedule

Assignment 4: Understanding the Problem Space for your Main Project (Due 10/29)
- Read relevant literature
  - Each team member finds and reads different literature based on our topic
  - Create literature review
- Do fieldwork
  - Direct observations
    - Following volunteering groups to club events such as beach cleanup
    - Observing Parks, Recreation Center
  - Identify key stakeholders
    - Conduct structured & unstructured interviews to solicit their insight & understandings
    - Interview:
      - UCLA Recreation
      - Ecological Restoration Association
      - Outdoor recreation clubs (The Backpacking Club, Ski Club)
      - Environmental clubs (CALPIRG, DIG, Beekeeping, Be Green Bruin)
      - Community Program Office (Fitted)
      - Heal the Bay
      - Natural History Museum
      - Urban Nature Research Center
- Create deliverables
  - Project report
    - Describe research techniques & process
    - Include key stakeholders & insights learned from interviews/conversations
  - Slide deck
    - Use photography/visual materials & text to tell a story and communicate observations & design recommendations

Assignment 5: Design Prototyping (Due 11/5)
- Run through iterative design process to get a clear idea of the overall product
  - Come up with user personas/journeys
  - Design basic information architecture
  - Low-fi wireframe sketches
  - Functional prototype(s)
- Deliverables
  - Updated project report

- ○ Updated slide deck
- ○ Links to Figma sketches and prototype(s)

Assignment 6: Usability Evaluation/Feedback and Design Revisions (Due 11/12)
- ● Conduct usability evaluation
  - ○ Create a structured script/protocol to follow during evaluation
    - ■ Should include user tasks and structured interview questions
  - ○ Recruit 5-10 relevant users
  - ○ Meet in-person (preferable) or online, record sessions
- ● Deliverables
  - ○ Document research techniques, protocol, number of participants, and criteria for participation
  - ○ Synthesize findings and update project report and slide deck

Assignment 8: First Draft of Final Presentation (Due 11/26)
- ● Shorten slide deck
  - ○ Edit slide deck to create shorter summary/overview of entire research and design process (aim for 10 min presentation time)

Assignment 9: Final Presentation and Project Documentation (Due 12/3)
- ● Deliverables
  - ○ Final presentation slide deck
  - ○ Video recording of presentation
    - ■ 10 min or shorter, upload to YouTube and submit link
  - ○ Final project report (GitHub repository, clearly label all files):
    - ■ Presentation materials
    - ■ Additional project files (sketches, Figma, etc.)
    - ■ Working documents
    - ■ Readme file that introduces project and outlines the contents of the repository

Individual Responsibilities

NAME	Responsibilities
Lin Huang	Writing, design, edit, web develop, visualization, task managing
Sophia Gao	Writing, research, design, editing
Isabella Lee	Writing, editing, planning/organizing, research, design
Lucian Li	Research, writing, design, prototyping (developing)

Group Responsibilities

As a group, we have decided on three general guidelines for working together. First, we agree to bring up and address any ideas and potential issues with the design or assignments as soon as possible, so we don't run into difficulties in the future. Second, we will be mindful of assignment deadlines and our project timeline, making sure to space our work out evenly so we aren't scrambling at the last minute. Lastly, we will make time to regularly meet and discuss the project and assignments so that we are all on the same page and avoid any miscommunications.

Research Techniques

Various research techniques will be utilized to collect the data required for this project. We will conduct user interviews by finding students at UCLA and reaching out to them either in person or in a virtual setting to ask questions that are designed to understand the mind and behaviors of potential users. We will also create online surveys that can be shared and filled out amongst UCLA students; these surveys will help us better accommodate our users by obtaining information on the frustrations and needs of UCLA students in relation to our topic. To gain ideas for the potential features and overall design of our project, we will search for existing platforms that address similar goals to the topic we chose.

Design Goals and Outcomes

Regarding design goals and outcomes, we want to be able to increase user awareness and their knowledge of local ecologies with our platform, allowing students to learn while also experiencing the recreational aspects. We also want students to get past the current barriers that are preventing them from engaging in these activities, and also have an increase in connections to volunteer groups and organizations on and off campus.