Woof River Animal Rescue:

Website Redesign Case Study

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DSGN 360

Background

Brief

Redesign a non-profit's website to enhance usability, aesthetics, and information archi- tecture. Requirements include: in-depth research, design exploration, and user testing. The end-goal is to design a multi- page, responsive site for desktop and mobile that promotes the message of the organization, engages users, and provides clear information.

Client

Woof River Animal Rescue is a volun- teer-run, dog-only, foster-based 501c3 organization in Memphis, TN. Their mission is to save as many dogs as possible from high-kill shelters and homelessness across the Mid-South. Each and every dog lives in a loving foster home until the perfect forever home is found.

They serve all ages and breeds, and they believe every dog deserves a chance to live in a warm, loving home.

Problem

Who is Woof River?

The current website lacks any sense of cohesive branding. The overall appearance leaves one feeling confused about messaging and legitimacy. Who is Woof River, and are they a professional organization?

The design is outdated, organization could be improved, content is too text heavy, and there is a distinct disconnect between the way Woof River presents on social media (fun, warm, and inviting) and the presentation of the website (stale and void of personality).

Finally, there are too many opportunities for the user to leave the site- links to various donation platforms, social media, and a separate adoption site.
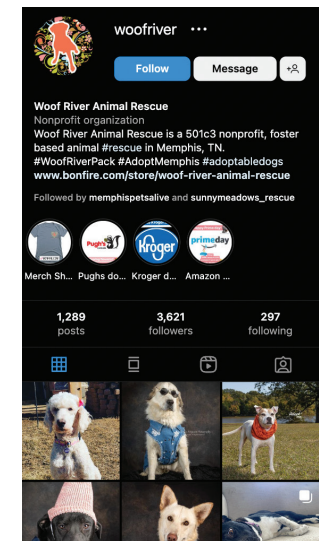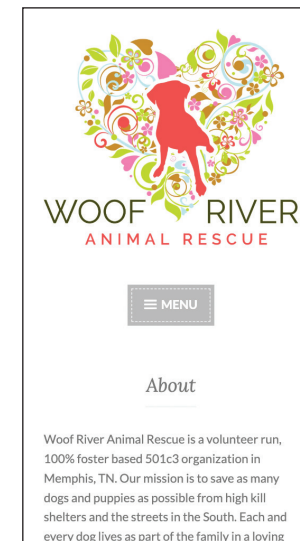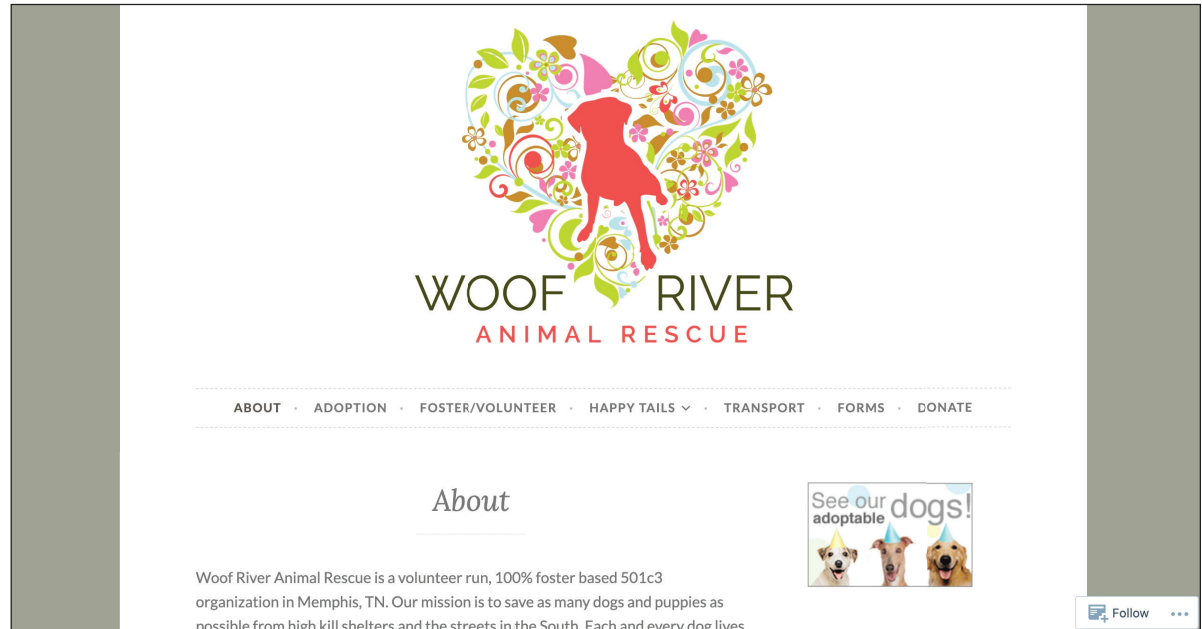
Current Woof River website on desktop and mobile, as well as their current Instagram feed.

Solution

Approach

Client, user, and brand goals need to be defined in order to identify missed opportunities and develop an improved site. The client's goal is to save dogs, while the user's goal varies between adoption, volunteering, and donation. The brand goals should be to establish trustworthiness as well as compassion and warmth.

Simple restructuring will help find opportunities to eliminate excessive links, making it easier for users to find what they need. Adding the list of adoptable dogs to the Woof River page will greatly reduce the number of users navigating away from the site. New branding will illustrate a cohesive message and feeling. Adding photos of dogs across the site will evoke emotion and enhance user engagement. Finally, editing body copy will reduce verbosity.
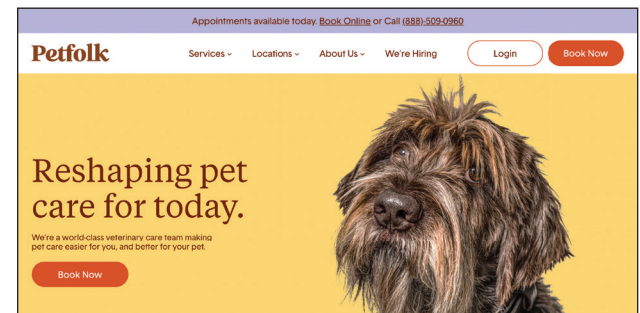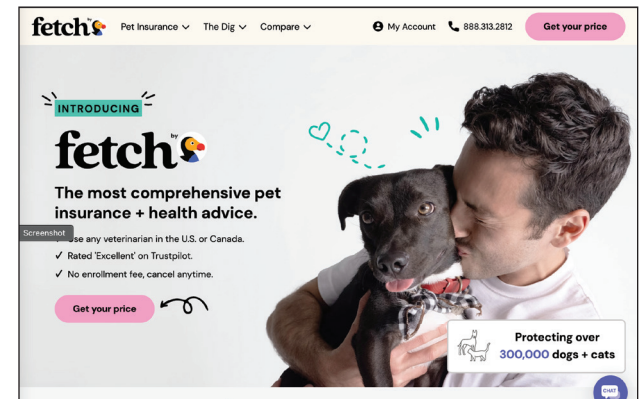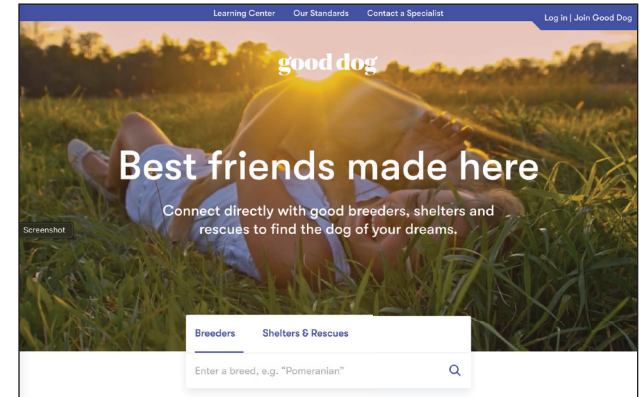
Process

Research: Competition

I looked at other animal rescues as well as non-rescue, animal-related sites.

Other Memphis-based rescues also seem to struggle with organization, content, and branding (albeit to a lesser degree). Therefore, I chose to explore some companies that exist outside of the non-profit field. The majority of well-established organizations use lots of photos of animals, have very clear and consistent branding, the messaging tends to veer towards friendly and inviting, and all content is concise and well-edited. Many use warm colors, fonts with rounded serifs, bold hierarchies, and very simple navigation.
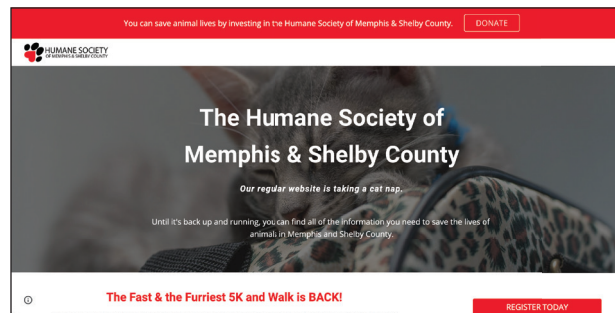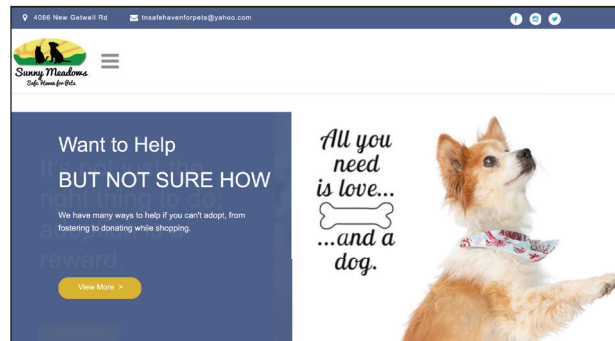
Left: Memphis-based rescues

Right: larger, animal-related organizations

Process

User Persona

Kevin Finch

Parent, potential adopter

Demographics

38M, married with a 7YO child, lives in Memphis, works full-time as a carrier for FedEx

Goals

Find a friendly, low(er) maintenance, family dog to keep their growing child company. Since his wife works part-time, she has a little more free time to devote to a new pet, but she doesn't have the bandwidth for lots of training and behavioral issues.

Behaviors and Habits

Doesn't have loads of free time, likes being active, often spends his weekends with his family at Shelby Farms

Technical Skills

Kevin is comfortable with most modern tech (cellphones, tablets, laptops, etc.), but doesn't have lots of time to devote to learning more complicated programs

Environment

Because Kevin works as a carrier, he mostly accesses the internet from his home lap-top (usually after their child goes to bed at night). However, he does check his cell-phone during breaks.

Relationships

Lives with wife (part-time nurse) and child. His wife's family lives in Murfreesboro, so they spend a few weekends there every year. Kevin's own family lives in Georgia and they rarely see each other, but often chat via Zoom or FaceTime.

Process

User Persona

Rae Sumner

Potential Foster Parent

Demographics

24NB, single but lives with a roommate, lives in Memphis, recent University of Memphis graduate, works remotely for a regional tech company as a copywriter.

Goals

Rae is feeling disillusioned about their job, and they're also frustrated with the lack of physical activity they're getting since they sit at a desk most of the day. They're hoping that volunteering as a foster dog parent will get them out of the house more regularly and help them feel like they're doing something positive in the world.

Behaviors and Habits

Working from home allows Rae a little more control over their schedule, so they can take breaks throughout the day. They use social media frequently; however, they really want to cut down on their screen time. They like to spend their weekends with their close-knit friends group, usually playing video games, crafting, or cooking.

Technical Skills

Rae is fairly tech savvy- they're adept with iPhone, Android, Mac OS, Windows, and various copy writing software. They started teaching themselves Blender so they could make custom content for gaming.

Environment

Rae spends most of their time at home where they can access the internet from their laptop, but once their workday is over, they try to at least go for a walk around the block to get outside.

Relationships

Rae lives with their roommate, Jamie. Jamie loves dogs, but he doesn't have time to help take care of one. He also gets up super early for his job, so he's hoping the dog won't add too much noise to the household.

Process

User Persona

Julie Sizemore
Retiree, Potential Donor

Demographics

67F, married to her husband of 38 years, retired actuary, lives in Nashville but spent lots of time in Memphis during her youth, has 1 daughter who is married with 2 small children, and 1 son who is single.

Goals

Julie likes to donate to local and regional charities during the holidays. This year, she was hoping to find an animal-related non-profit since her eldest grandson wants to be a vet when he grows up. Julie wants to find a company that is trustworthy with a good presence.

Behaviors and Habits

Julie is retired, so she has lots of free time to devote to her hobbies. She enjoys crocheting, playing the piano, and her weekly tango lessons. She likes to spend as much time as possible with her grandbabies, but her children are often too busy to schedule family time.

Technical Skills

Julie was great with the technology necessary to do her job as an actuary, but a lot has changed since she's retired. She's not particularly motivated to learn new tech, and she gets frustrated easily by complicated navigation, small fonts, and other inconveniences.

Environment

Julie spends most of her time at home where she can access the internet, but her computer is outdated. She has a smartphone, but doesn't really enjoy using it (except for taking pictures of her grandkids)

Relationships

Julie usually asks her husband, Rick, to look for non-profits to which they can donate, but he's not that interested in it. Her children are a little more helpful with ideas, but they're too busy to do very much background research.
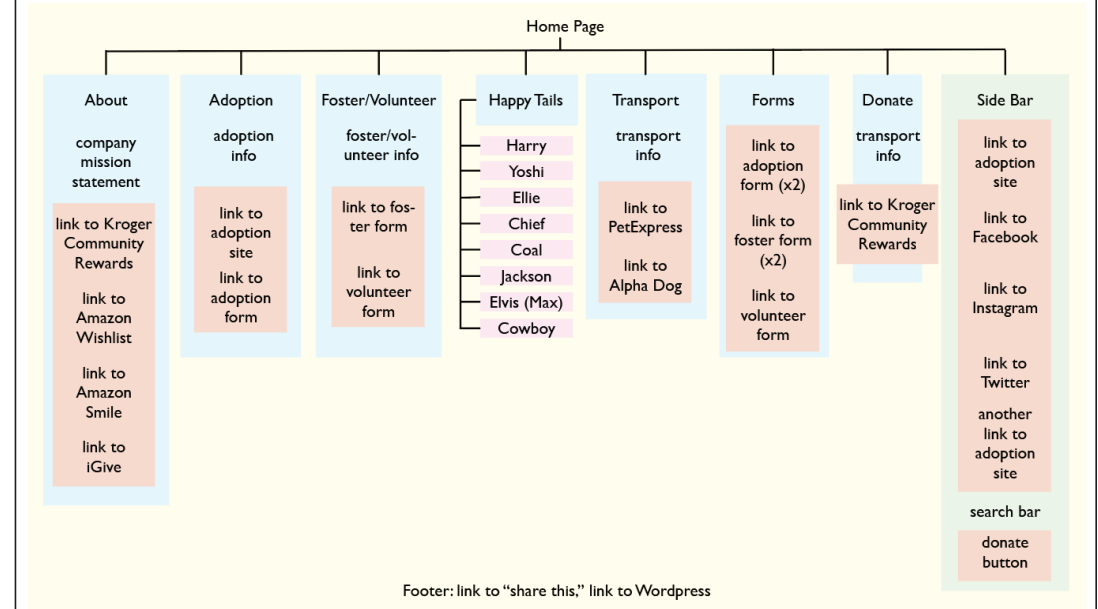
Process

Concept Evolution

After evaluating websites from competitors and exploring user personas, I determined that the site needs to appear friendly, warm, and approachable, yet professional and legitimate. The main goal of the client is to save as many dogs as possible, so the site needs to be engaging. However, user goals may vary, so the site also needs to be easy to navigate.
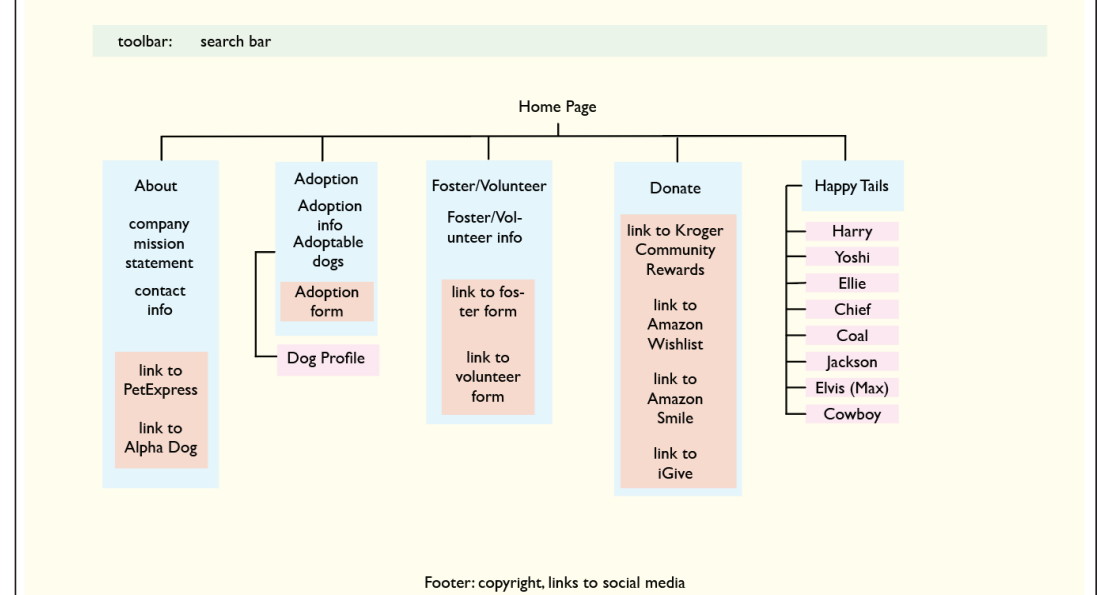
As you can see on the "old" site map, there are excessive and redundant opportunities to leave the Woof River site, which is confusing and frustrating for users. I created a "new" site map that maintains essential links, but consolidates and clarifies the information.

I also felt it was important to include the list of adoptable dogs on the Woof River site to help increase engagement. This will prevent people from navigating to the outside adoption site and closing the main Woof River page.


SITE MAP (OLD)

Home Page

About — company mission statement, link to Kroger Community Rewards, link to Amazon Wishlist, link to Amazon Smile, link to iGive

Adoption — adoption info, link to adoption site, link to adoption form

Foster/Volunteer — foster/volunteer info, link to foster form, link to volunteer form

Happy Tails — Harry, Yoshi, Ellie, Chief, Coal, Jackson, Elvis (Max), Cowboy

Transport — transport info, link to PetExpress, link to Alpha Dog

Forms — link to adoption form (x2), link to foster form (x2), link to volunteer form

Donate — transport info, link to Kroger Community Rewards

Side Bar — link to adoption site, link to Facebook, link to Instagram, link to Twitter, another link to adoption site, search bar, donate button

Footer: link to "share this," link to Wordpress

SITE MAP (NEW)

toolbar: search bar

Home Page

About — company mission statement, contact info, link to PetExpress, link to Alpha Dog

Adoption — Adoption info, Adoptable dogs, Adoption form, Dog Profile

Foster/Volunteer — Foster/Volunteer info, link to foster form, link to volunteer form

Donate — link to Kroger Community Rewards, link to Amazon Wishlist, link to Amazon Smile, link to iGive

Happy Tails — Harry, Yoshi, Ellie, Chief, Coal, Jackson, Elvis (Max), Cowboy

Footer: copyright, links to social media

Process

Wire Frames

Here, you can see the early wire frame explorations I created to help me start refining my design. At this point, I selected the user flow I wanted to elaborate on for my prototype (home page > adoption page > dog profile).
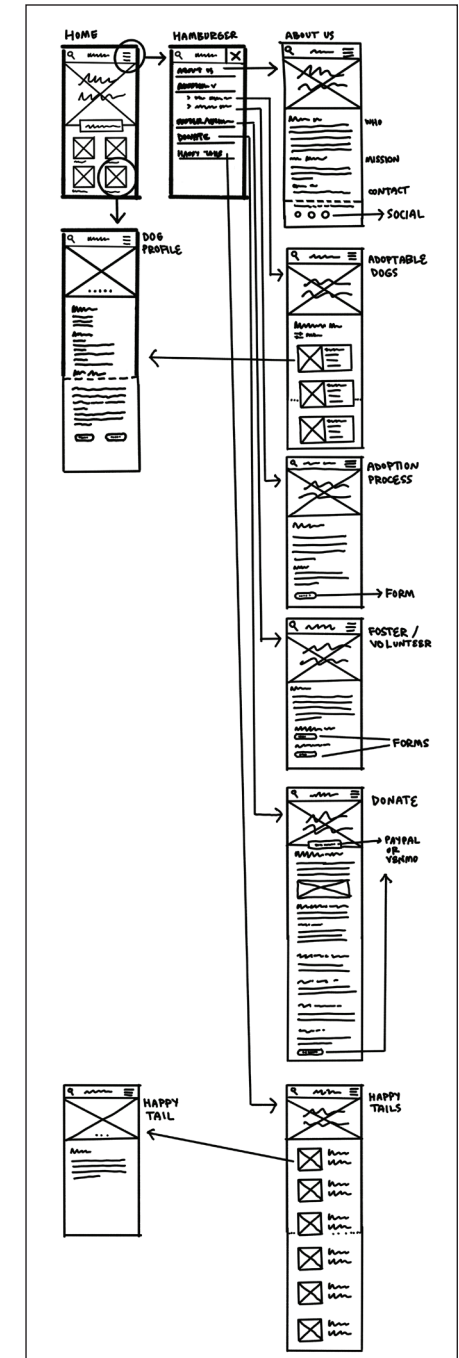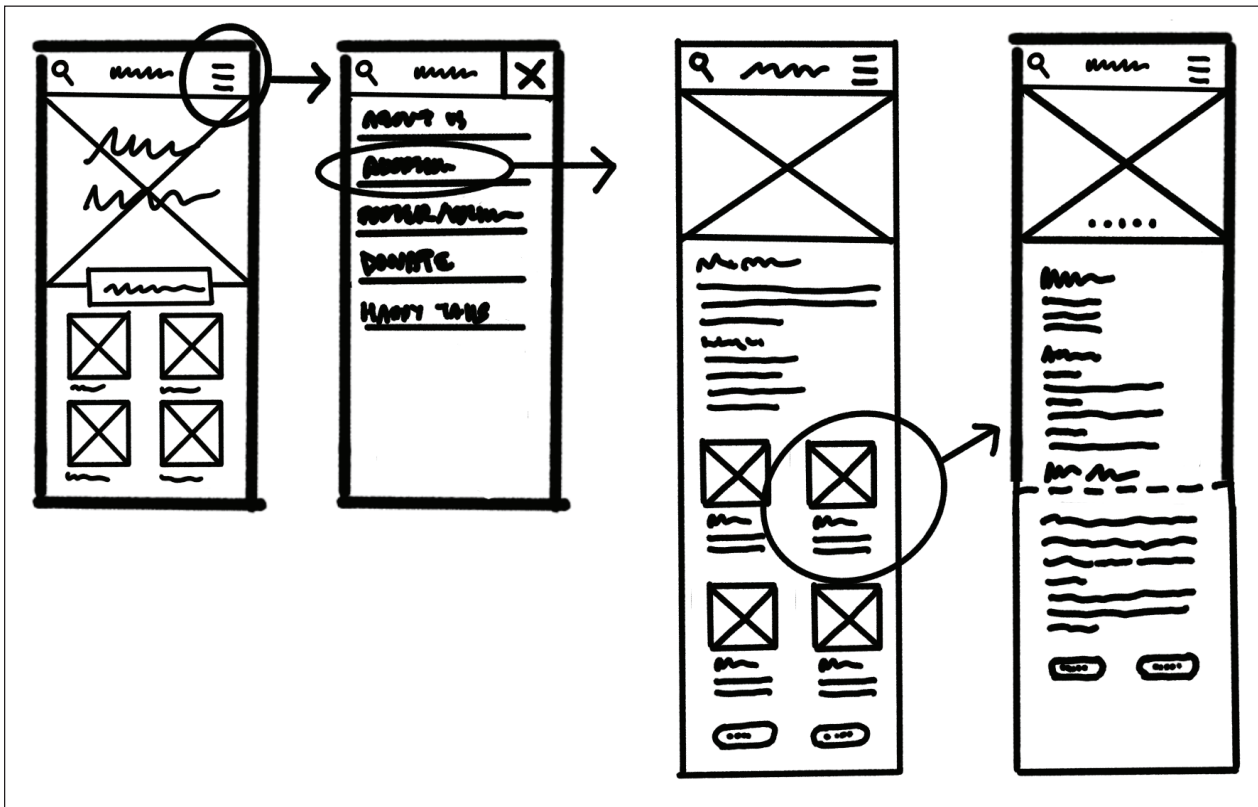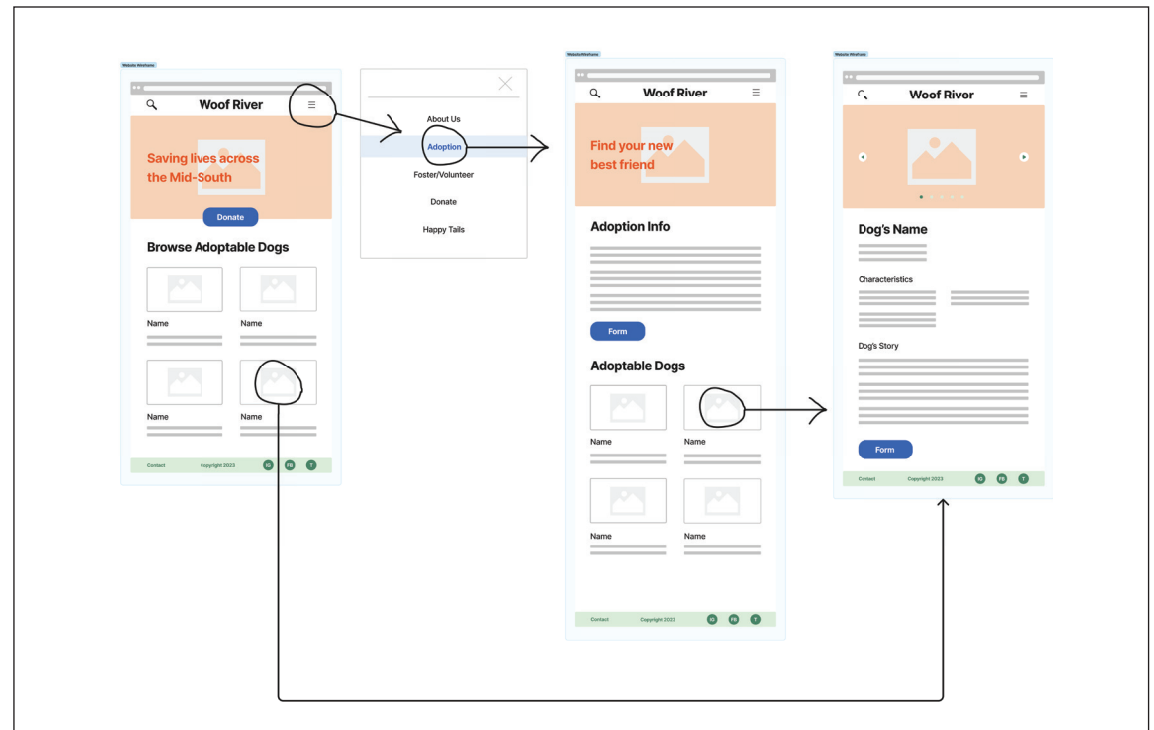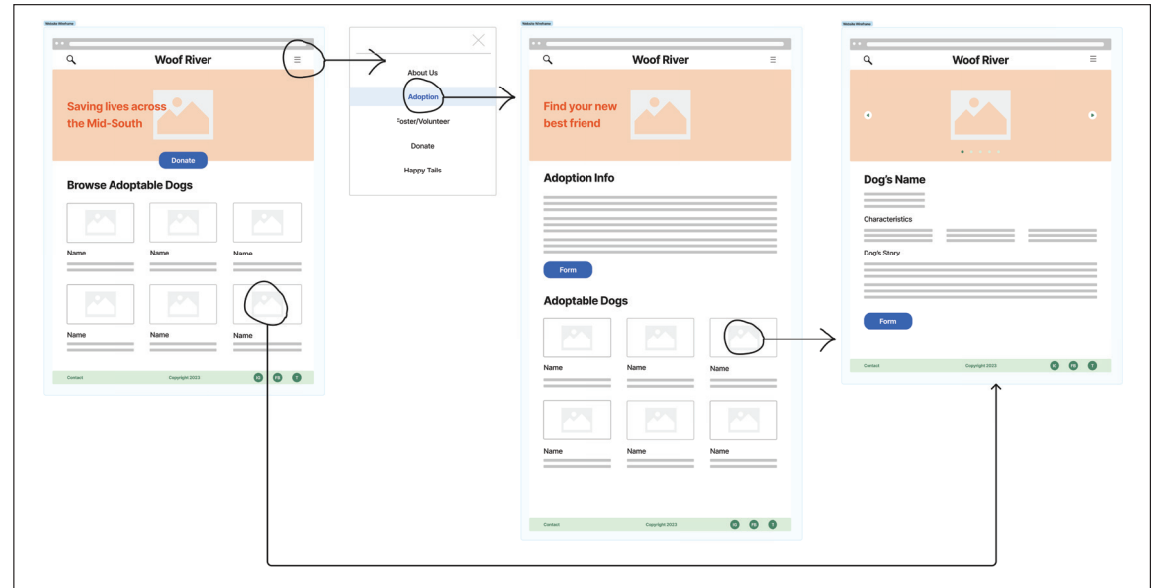
Process

Wire Frames

When I first created these high fidelity wire frames, I stuck with a hamburger menu on the desktop version of the site; however, users stated that they preferred a nav bar for desktop since it removes the additional step of having to click on the hamburger, and all nav options are visible at once.

Users also said they weren't crazy about showing all the adoptable dogs on the homepage, and expressed that it might be more helpful to have a generalized "adoptable dogs" button alongside other "calls-to-action."

Process

Wire Frames

The refined wire frames show the addition of a standard nav bar to the desktop homepage, and the removal of "browse adoptable dogs" from both mobile and desktop homepages.
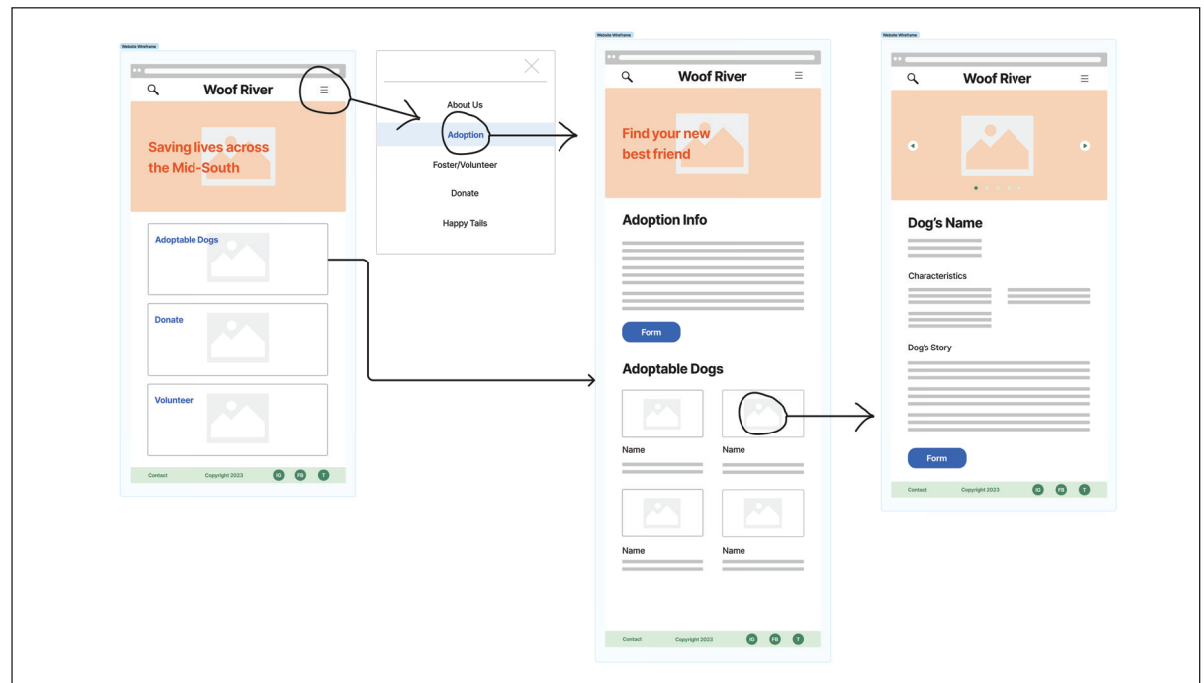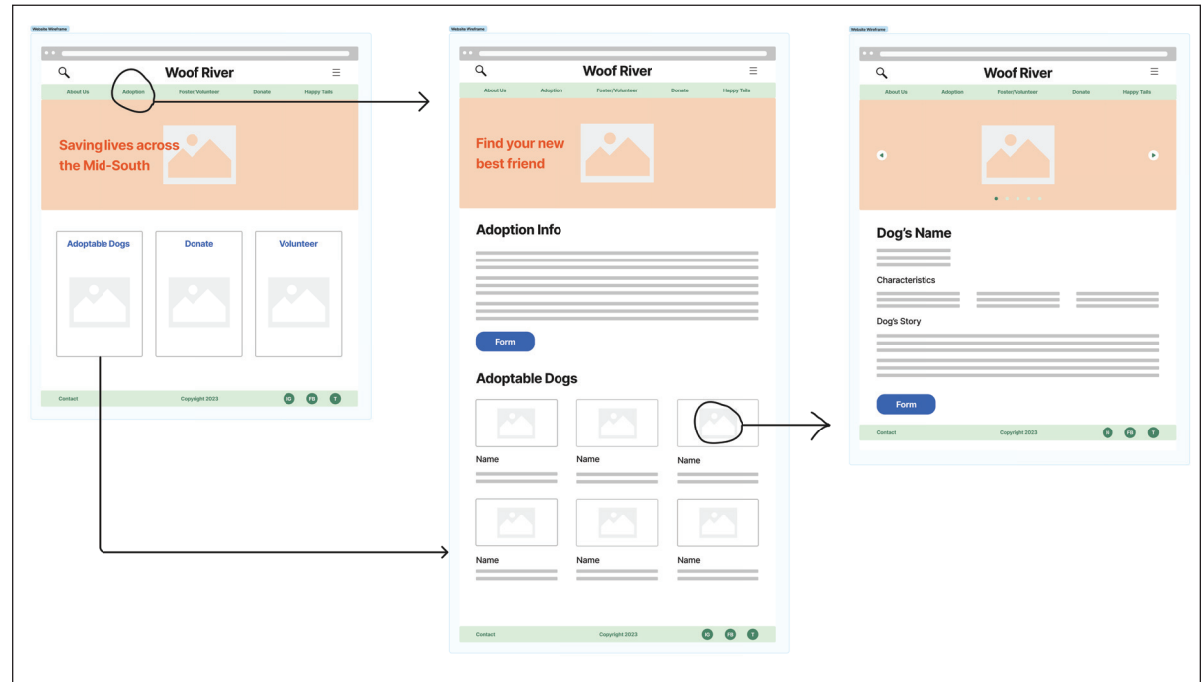
Process

Moodboard

This moodboard shows the animal-related websites the inspired the new site design. Additionally, I wanted to give Woof River a little branding update, so I created a new logo using a playful, rounded serif typeface, and selected some bright and friendly colors to enhance the brand.

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Cerulean Blue	Tea Green	Viridian	Desert Sand	Flame
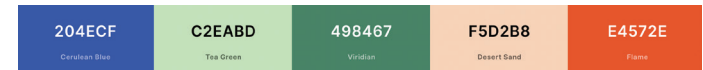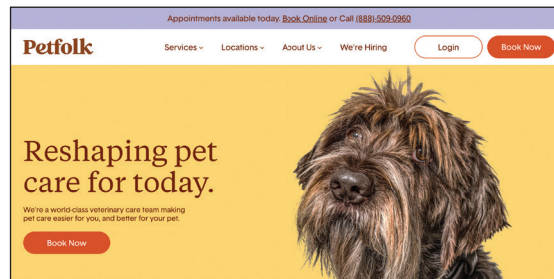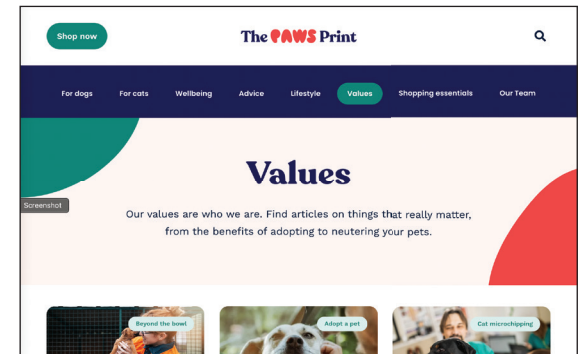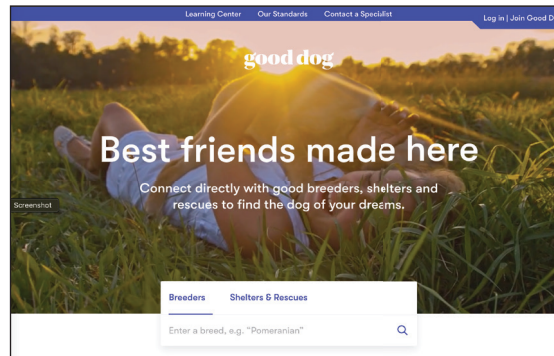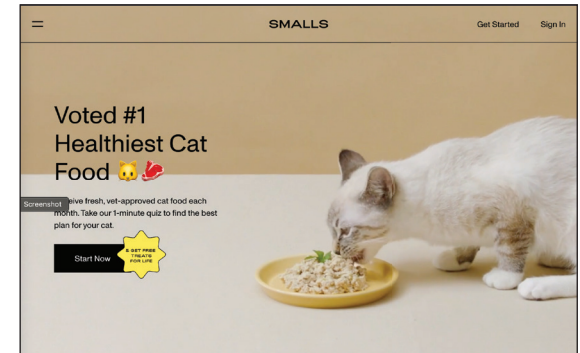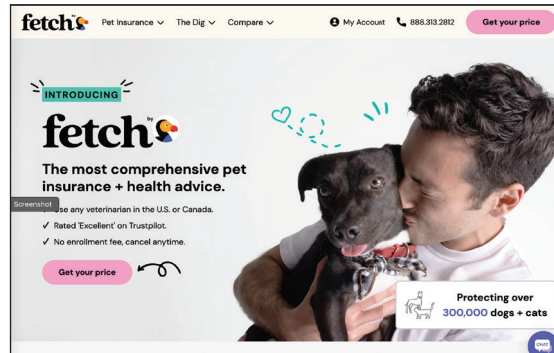
**Woof River**

Process

Usability Testing

The initial designs tested relatively well with users. Navigation was easy on both desktop and mobile. However, users did express that there could be more design elements to help "liven up" the site, and they wanted a statement to help clarify the company's mission on the homepage. Additionally, some users wanted to swipe (rather than tap) to scroll through the photo carousel on the Dog Profiles.
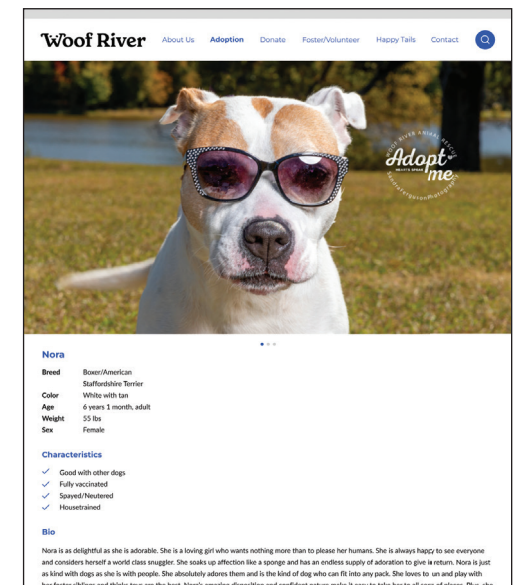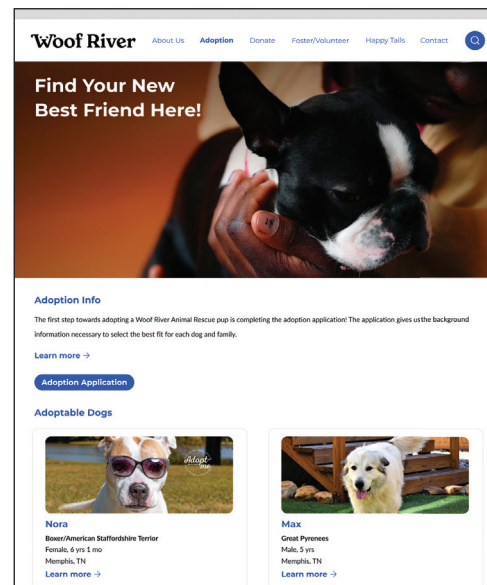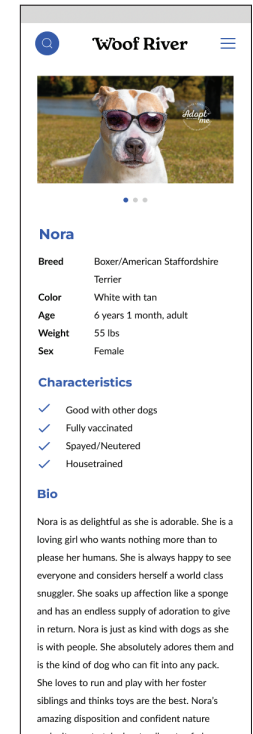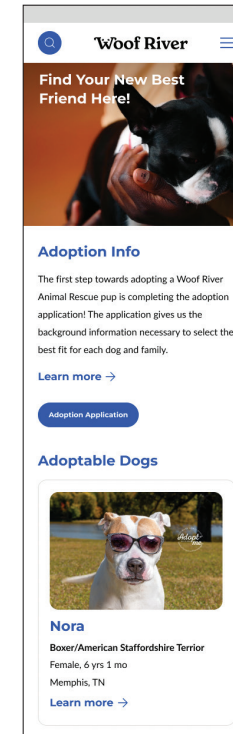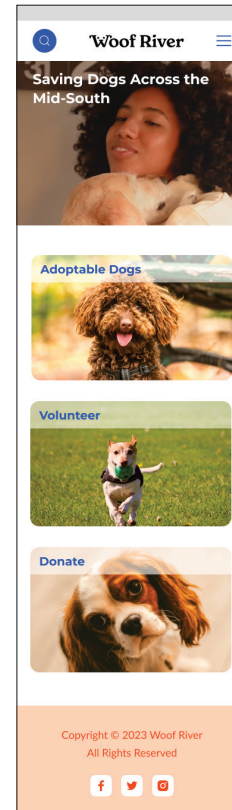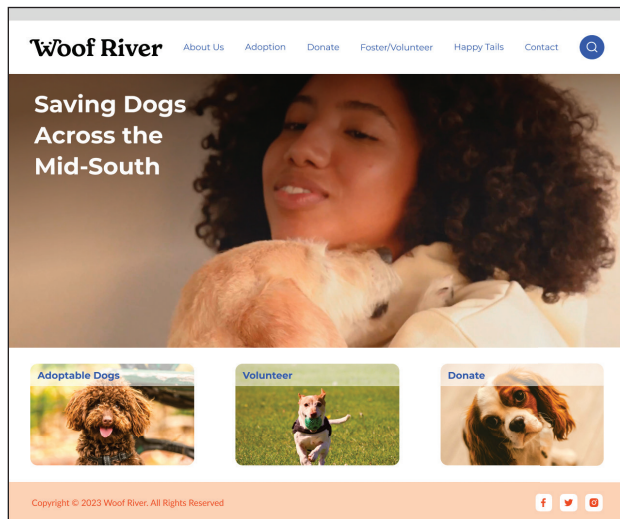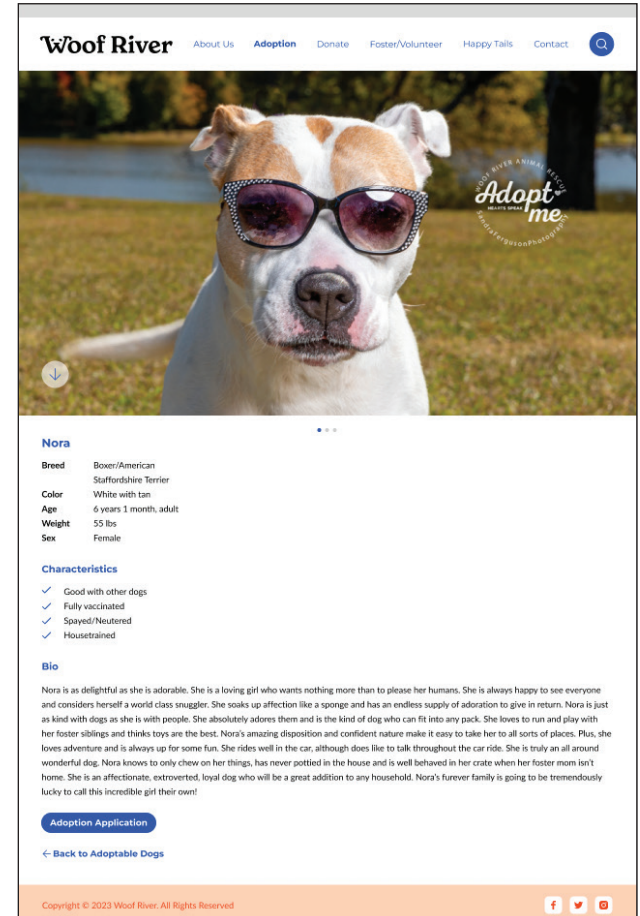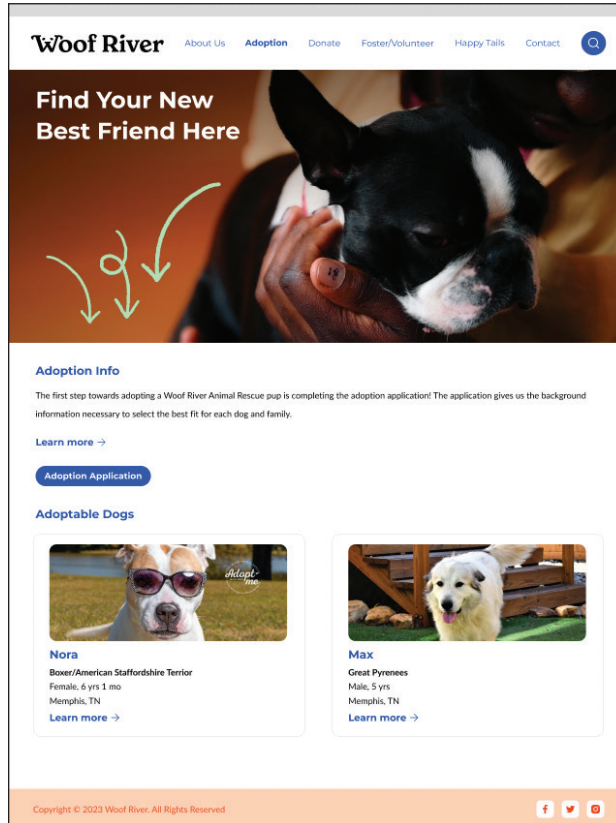
Outcome

Final Design: Mobile

I added some animated gifs, a blurb about the company on the home page, a "back to adoptable dogs" button, and changed the carousel navigation to swipe (as well as other, less noticeable refinements to type and layout).
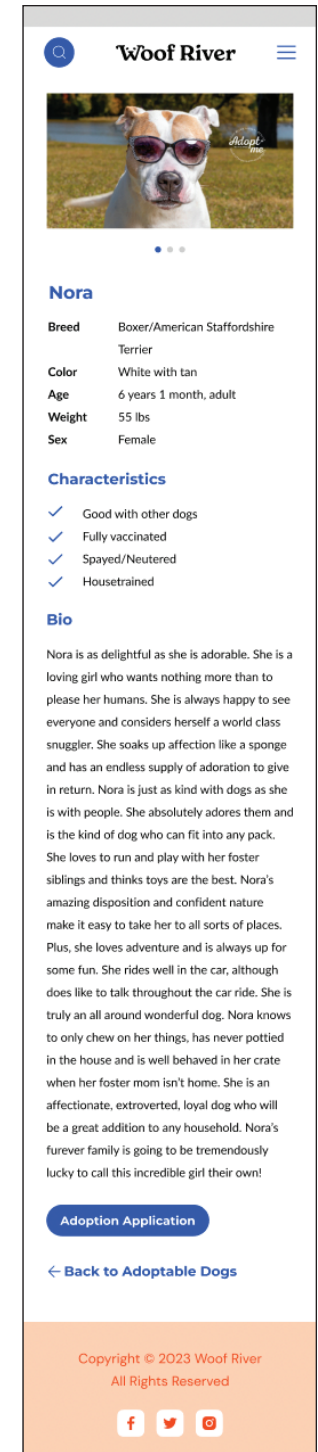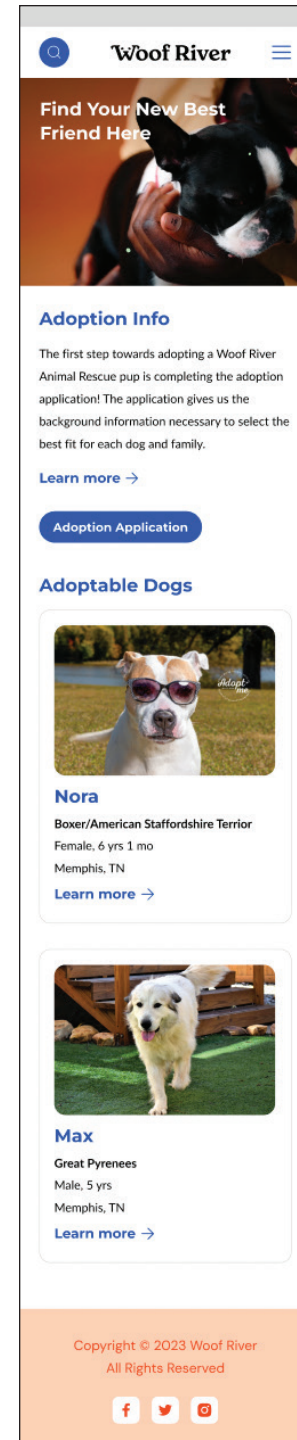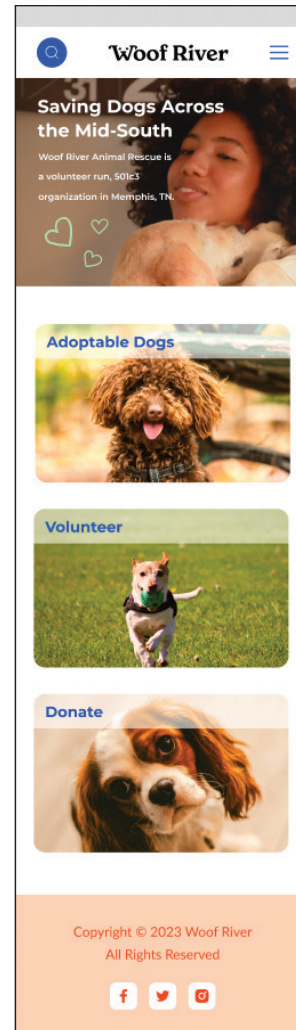
Outcome

Final Design: Desktop

Outcome

Challenges

Getting started was the hardest part. I was lucky that I didn't have as much content as other students, but I struggle with organization, so redesigning and clarifying the site map was tricky for me.

Reflection

I was really glad I started getting user feedback at the wire frame stage. Initially, I didn't really think it would be that useful, but I think it saved me a lot of time once I got into Figma.

Future Goals

It would be nice to design some of the other pages, as this could be a good portfolio piece.