

POSEIDON

USER GUIDE

(v1.7.0)

Low Poly Water system for Unity

PROLOGUE

Poseidon is a complete solution for creating beautiful low poly water-scape, especially built for Unity developers. This is a must-have asset which saves you thousands hours of work and tons of effort, and gives you more time and resources to focus on other aspects of your game.

This User Guide is created to help you get started with the tool, including the most basic information about its features and workflow, as well as best practices, tips and tricks from its creator and showcasing amazing work from other successful developers.

To see the release log, please visit [this page](#).

For business, please contact: hello@pinwheel.studio

For support, report a bug or request a feature, please contact: support@pinwheel.studio

RELEASE LOG

V1.7.0

NEW FEATURES

- Adding support for Aura 2 volumetric light & fog.

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V1.6.3

NEW FEATURES

- Adding Wave Mask to define wave height and crest intensity in a particular region. Wave Mask take effect on both shader and C# side.

IMPROVEMENTS

- Refraction now take Light Absorption into account. Refracted image only visible in range of [0, MaxDepth], otherwise it will appear as DepthColor.
- Caustic now doesn't require Light Absorption anymore.

FIXES

- Auto Time mode now take Time.timeScale into account.
- Minor fixes.

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V1.6.2

NEW FEATURES

- Adding Manual Time mode that being set outside of the PWater script. Useful for multiplayer games that need to sync water animation across clients.

FIXES

- Fix Mesh Noise, Foam, Caustic to use unified Time params.

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V1.6.1

FIXES

- Adding simple check for reflection camera rotation to get rid of "Screen position out of view frustum..." error.
- Minor code fix.

===

V1.6.0

IMPORTANT

- This update requires a complete removal and reimport of the asset!

NEW FEATURES

- Complete shader rewrite for both Builtin RP and Universal RP.
- Adding Flat Lighting option that evaluate lighting uniformly on the polygon.
- Lambert and Blinn Phong light model now available for Builtin RP.

IMPROVEMENTS

- Asset import now a lot faster.

FIXES

- Exclude the Water Spline Sync modifier when using Polaris 2019.
- Minor fixes.

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V1.5.6

IMPROVEMENTS

- Adding support for Unity 2020.2 and URP 10.2.2+.

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V1.5.5

FIXES

- Skip rendering reflection for Overlay Camera in URP.

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V1.5.4

NEW FEATURES

- Adding extension function to query vertex height at runtime.

IMPROVEMENTS

- Minor improvements for all shaders.

FIXES

- Minor editor fixes.

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V1.5.3

FIXES

- Fix shader compile error in URP.

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V1.5.2

FIXES

- Fix Water FX setup issue in URP

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V1.5.1

FIXES

- Fix build fail issue on Android when Crest Foam is enabled.
- Fix Ripple and Foam issue on GLES2 and GLES3.

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V1.5.0

NEW FEATURES

- Adding Underwater and Wet Lens support for URP.
- Adding new shader variant for back face render (Tileable Plane only)

IMPROVEMENTS

- Adding more instruction to Water FX demo scene.

FIXES

- Minor bugs fixing.

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V1.4.1

IMPROVEMENTS

- Adding support for Unity 2020.

FIXES

- Fix foam issue in URP.

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V1.4.0

NEW FEATURES

- Adding Wave effect.
- Adding Crest Foam and Slope Foam effect.

IMPROVEMENTS

- Optimize screen position calculation for URP shader.
- Adding Height Offset for Polaris Spline Sync modifier.

FIXES

- Minor fixes.

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V1.3.4

IMPROVEMENTS

- Rewrite URP shaders using newest URP template. Better environment lighting.
- Water now receive shadow in URP.

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V1.3.3

NEW FEATURES

- Adding Tiles Follow Main Camera option for ease of making infinite open water.

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V1.3.2

NEW FEATURES

- Adding Water Spline Sync modifier for Polaris Spline tool.

IMPROVEMENTS

- Show Foam Color as HDR color picker.

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V1.3.1

FIXES

- Fix water mesh type keep revert back to Tileable Plane when entering Play mode.

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V1.3.0

NEW FEATURES

- Adding Area, Spline and Custom Mesh mode as experimental features.
- Adding new River shader for spline mesh.

IMPROVEMENTS

- Mesh settings now move from Water Profile to Water component and serialize with the scene.
- Foam now reacts correctly with scene lighting.
- Ripple scale well with water object scale.
- Refine frame pre-render check (depth texture, opaque texture, MSAA).
- Better tile pinning mode, drag left mouse to add more tiles.
- Refraction in Builtin RP now uses Grab Texture instead of re-render.

FIXES

- Fix gizmos bug in OnSceneGUI callback.
- Fix Ripple and Foam effect on GLES3.

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V1.2.9

IMPROVEMENTS

- Adding support for Refraction and Caustic in VR.

- Support for Single Pass Instanced stereo rendering.

FIXES

- Fix water FX shaders, removing distortion artifacts.

DEPRECATED

- Remove support for LWRP.

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V1.2.8

IMPROVEMENTS

- Adding some scene view message following mouse position in Tile Pinning mode.

FIXES

- Fix some build issues.
- Unlock water rotation.

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V1.2.7

FIXES

- Strip water effect shader to prevent build failure when PPv2 is not installed.

===

V1.2.6

IMPROVEMENTS

- Stop rendering reflection when not needed.

FIXES

- Fix some issues with VR rendering for Light Absorption and Foam.
- Temporarily disable Reflection, Refraction and Caustic in VR, update coming soon.
- Minor bug fixes.

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V1.2.5

IMPORTANT!

- Please BACK UP your project and perform a clean update due to major package structure changes.

IMPROVEMENTS

- Re-organize project files.
- Adding some tests for detecting mis-configuring in package settings.

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V1.2.4

NEW FEATURES

- Adding water effect (Underwater, Wet Lens).
- Adding a back face shader variant.

IMPROVEMENTS

- Minor editor workflow updates.

FIXES

- Minor issue fixes.

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V1.2.3

FIXES

- Fix shader references in LWRP.

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V1.2.2

NEW FEATURES

- Now you can select which lighting model to use: Physical Based, Blinn Phong, Lambert.

IMPROVEMENTS

- Optimize all shaders for Mobile devices.

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V1.2.1

IMPROVEMENTS

- Refraction: now read from camera opaque texture in LWRP, URP instead of re-render the scene.

FIXES

- Fix water tiles not being saved in the editor in some cases.
- Fix material render queue getting resetted to default shader value.

===

V1.2.0

NEW FEATURES

- Adding more water mesh pattern: Hexagon, Diamond, Quad.
- New Caustic effect.

IMPROVEMENTS

- Better performance for Foam HQ effect.
- Adding blur filter for Reflection, useful for low-res reflection textures.
- Reorganize include files.

FIXES

- Depth-based effects (Light Absorption, Foam, etc) now work correctly in orthographic mode.
- Water now reacts correctly to built-in fog.

CHANGES

- Ripple effect now always on.

DEPRECATED

- Horizon Blend effect was removed. Use built-in fog instead.

V1.1.0

NEW FEATURES

- Adding support for Universal Render Pipeline.

IMPROVEMENTS

- Editor GUI: Display water tiles list in the inspector.

FIXES

- Fix reflection and refraction glitching in LWRP and URP.

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V1.0.1

FIXES

- Package now initialize correctly in LWRP.

===

V1.0.0

Initial release

INTRODUCTION

Poseidon is a user friendly water system dedicated to help you create an impressive water-scape, deeply focused on low-poly and stylized world, that can run well on both Mobile and Desktop applications, saving you a lot of time and effort!

Poseidon is carefully designed to totally eliminate the frustration of complexity, giving you the fastest and easiest experience of exploring and creating, empowered by the latest techniques from the inside, giving the highest quality of achievement. Even if you are a beginner or an advanced creator, it is just the right tool for you!

Different from other low poly water sets, Poseidon is the first one which fully supports Universal Render Pipeline and Built-in Render Pipeline, with various settings for you to customize, such as light absorption, shore blend, reflection, refraction, etc. Those features can be easily turned on and off with a simple toggle.

Poseidon also comes with sample assets and example scenes for you to play with. You can even use them in your commercial projects. Have fun!

FREQUENTLY USED EDITOR MENUS

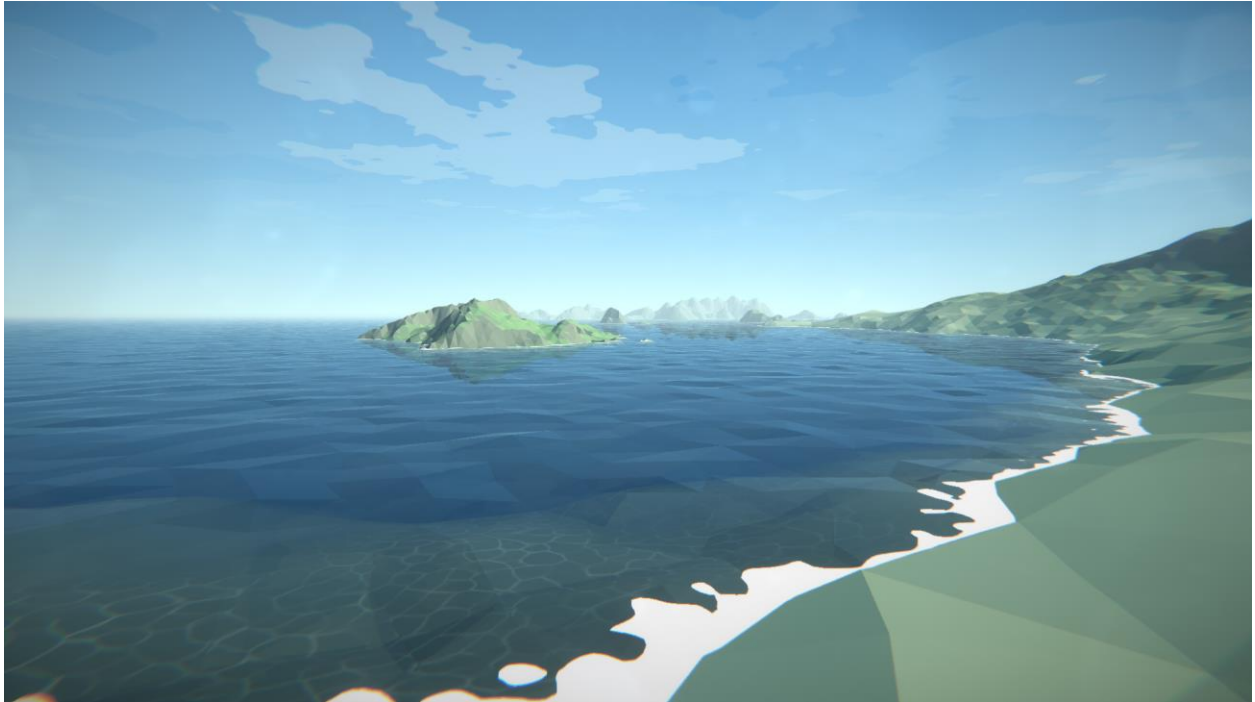
You can easily find Poseidon functionalities in these editor menus:

- **Assets>Create>Poseidon>...**: Create specific assets like Water Profile, etc.
- **GameObject>Create>3D Object>Poseidon>...**: Create water object in the scene.
- **Window>Poseidon>...**: Open additional editor window or configure Poseidon global settings.

CREATE AND CUSTOMIZE WATER OBJECT

Create Water object

To create a new Water object, go to **GameObject>3D Object>Poseidon>Calm Water [HQ]** depending on your quality requirement.

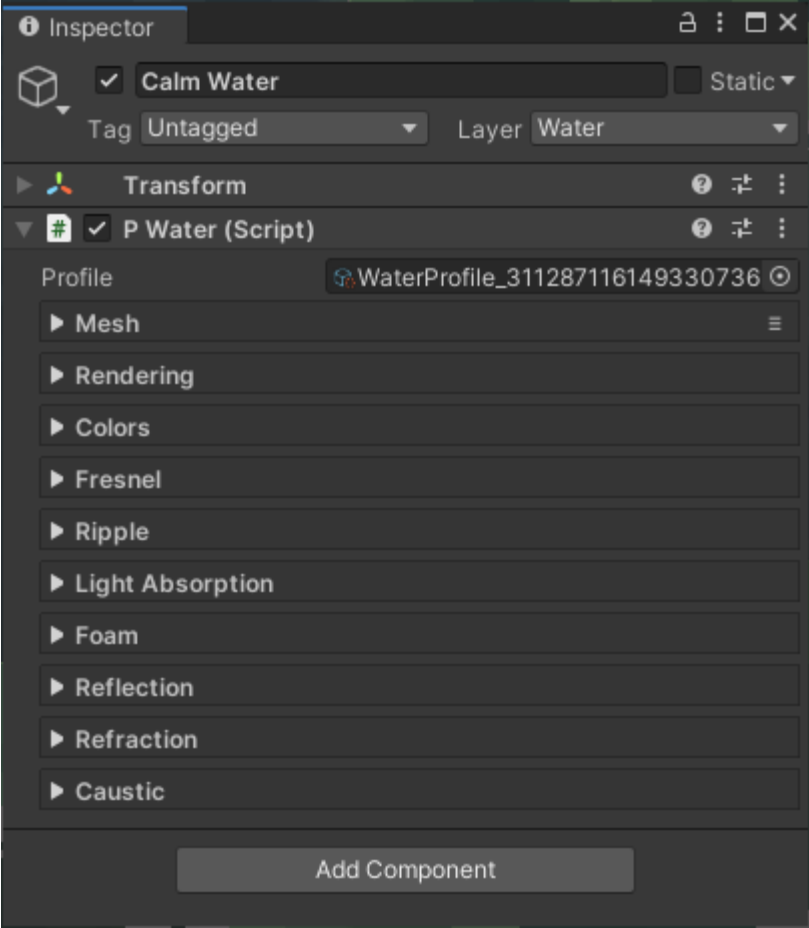


A new game object will be spawned into the scene.

A new Water Profile asset will be created in Assets/ folder. You should rename and store it in a different directory for ease of management.

Select the water game object, in the Inspector, you can see a variety of settings to customize it.

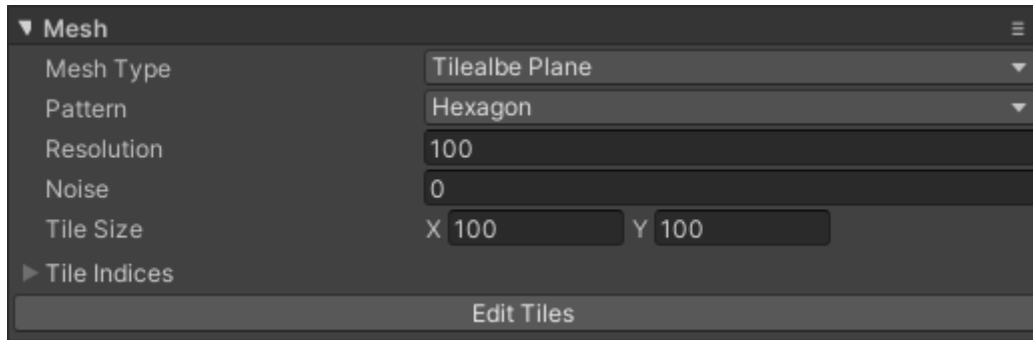
NOTE: The water object is designed to work without rotation. It is highly recommended to leave rotation at (0,0,0) for all features to work correctly, except when you need it for some special purposes.



Mesh

Control water mesh generation. There are 4 mesh types: Tileable Plane, Area, Spline and Custom Mesh.

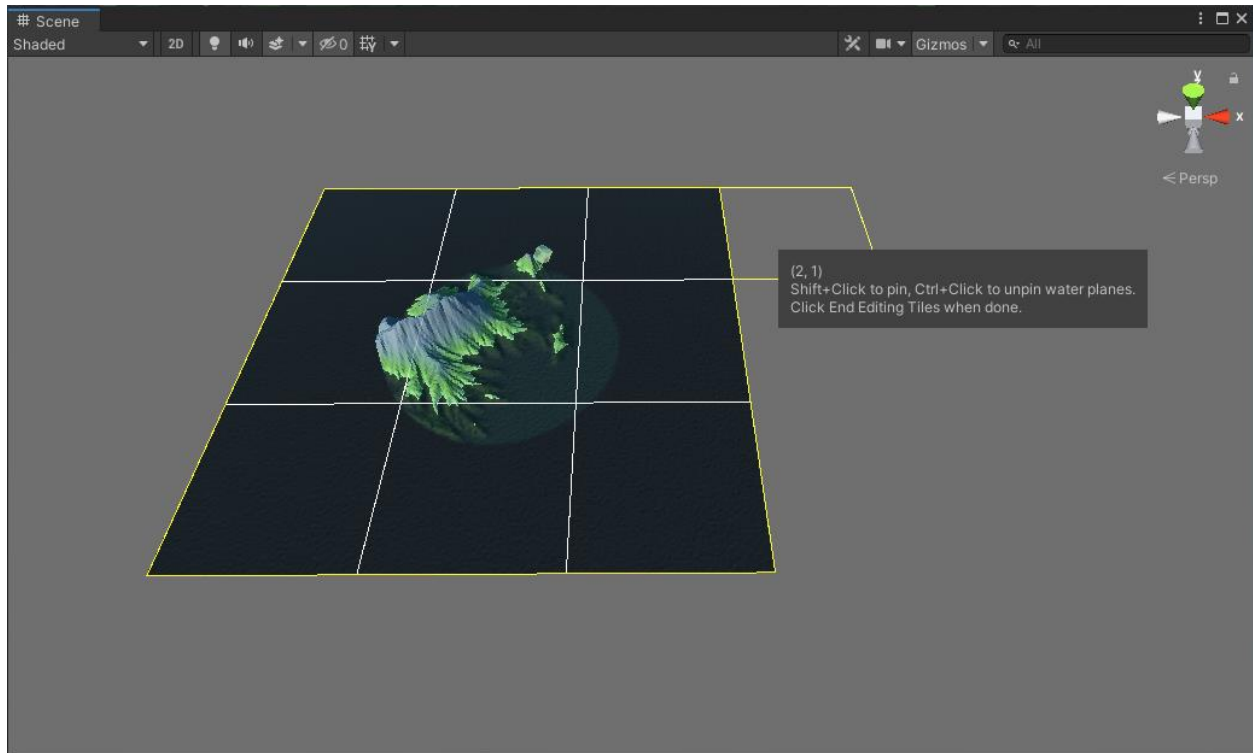
Tileable Plane



This mode will generate a seamless plane mesh and render it multiple times in different locations in the scene to easily cover a large area.

- Pattern: Chose mesh pattern (Hexagon, Diamond, Quad)
- Resolution: Resolution of the mesh, higher numbers give more triangles and vertices. This will be limited to 100 due to vertices count limit (65k).
- Noise: Displace vertices on XZ-plane.
- Tile Size: Width and length of a tile to render in world space.
- Follow Main Camera: If turned on, the water object will offset itself based on Main Camera position. Very useful when you want to make an ocean/open water which only need a few pre-pinned tiles. See [Creating ocean/open water](#).
- Tile Indices: A list of already pinned tiles. Usually you don't need to modify this list, use the "Edit Tiles" button instead.

To add or remove water tiles, click on Edit Tiles.

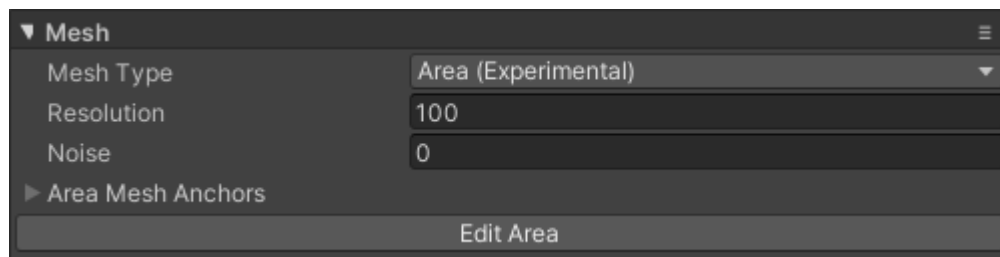


Hover your mouse over the scene view, you will see some rectangles. Use **Shift+Left Mouse** to add a tile at that location and **Ctrl+Left Mouse** to remove one.

Tip: Instead of clicking, you can drag your mouse to quickly add or remove tiles.

When you are happy with the tiles, click **End Editing Tiles** in the Inspector to finish.

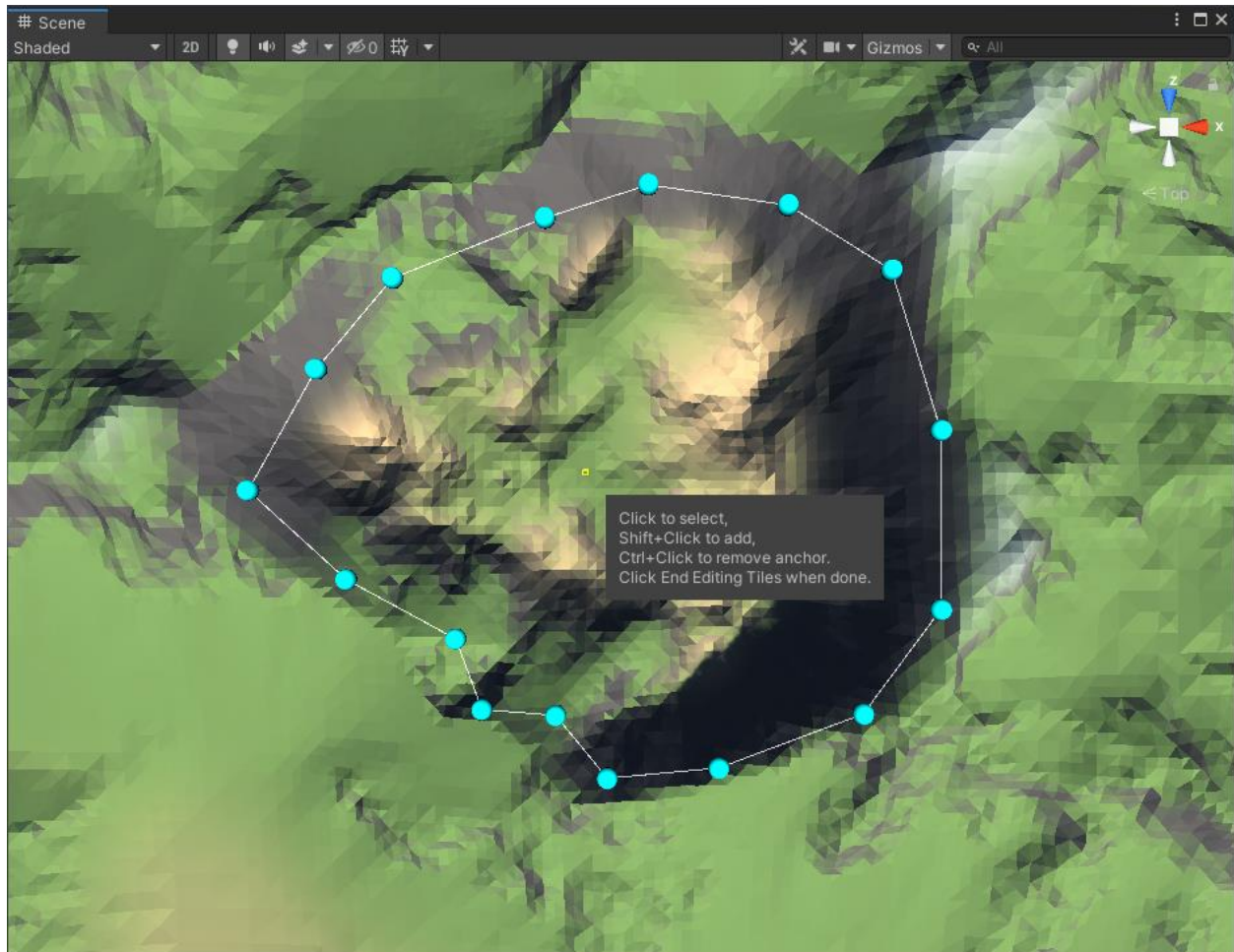
Area (Experimental)



This mode allows you to generate water mesh from concave polygon. The mesh will lay flat on XZ-plane at the same Y coordinate of its water object. This is useful for things such as lakes and swimming pools where you can strip off unnecessary vertices and save some processing power in the vertex shader.

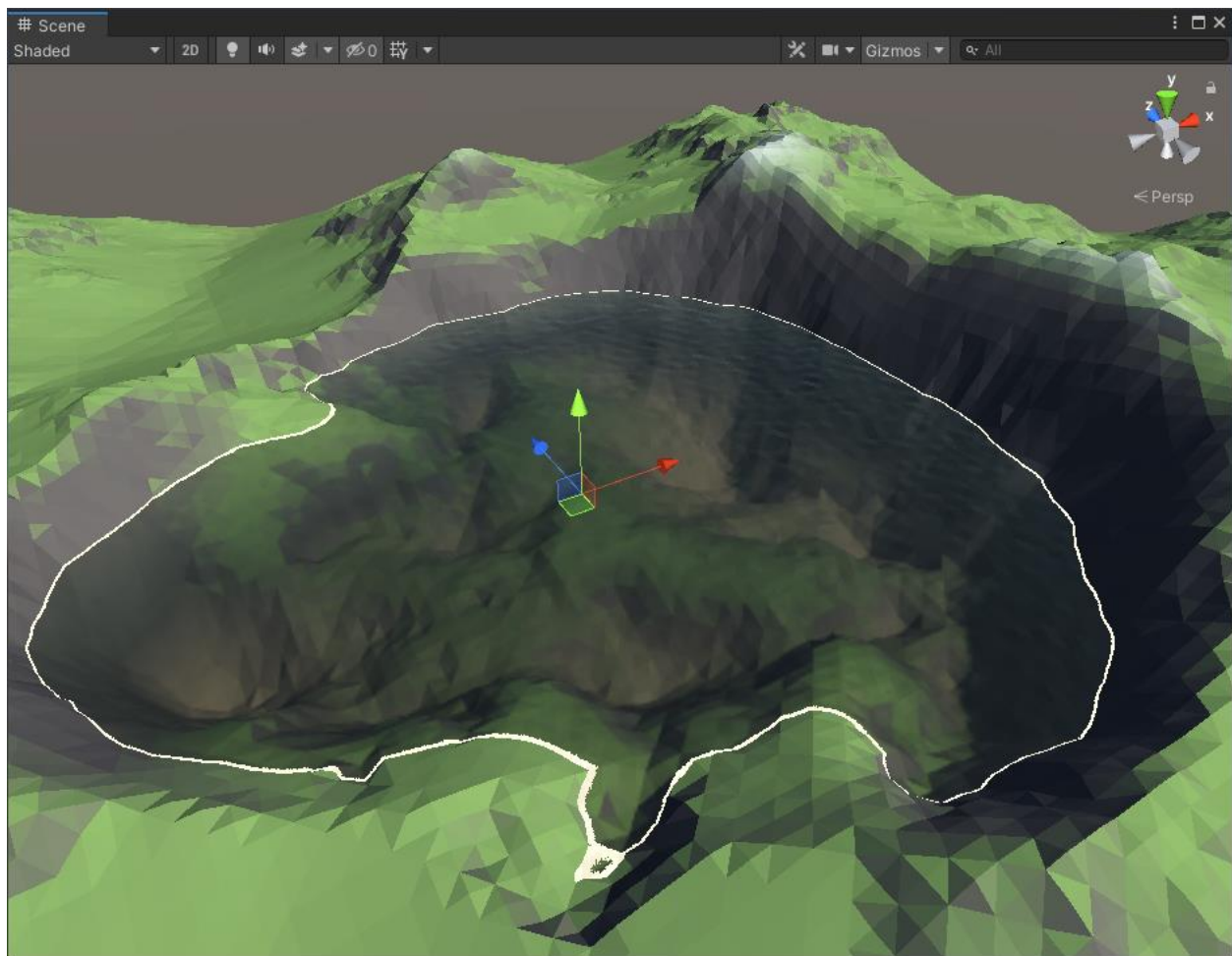
- Resolution: Resolution of the mesh, higher numbers give more triangles and vertices. This will be limited to 100 due to vertices count limit (65k).
- Noise: Displace vertices on XZ-plane.

To edit the mesh, click on the **Edit Area** button.



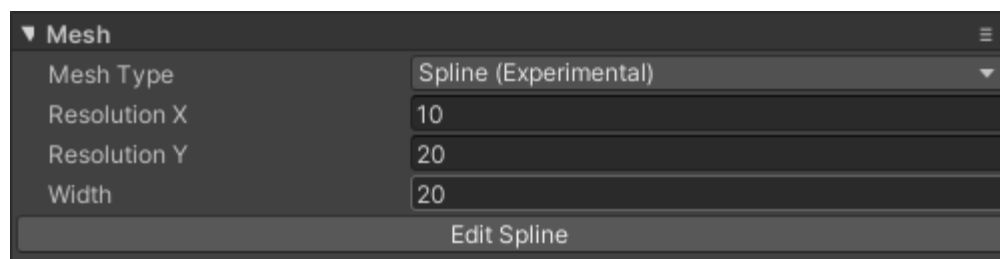
In the Scene View, use **Shift+Left Mouse** and **Ctrl+Left Mouse** to add/remove anchor points. Anchor points will be connected to form a concave polygon. At least 3 anchor points are required to generate area mesh. Click **End Editing Area** when done.

Remember that anchors will be laid on XZ-plane, so switch to Top view for a better sense of your area. You can adjust the water object position and scale after this to fit it in your scene.



In this picture, the water object was moved up and scale up a bit to fit in place.

Spline (Experimental)

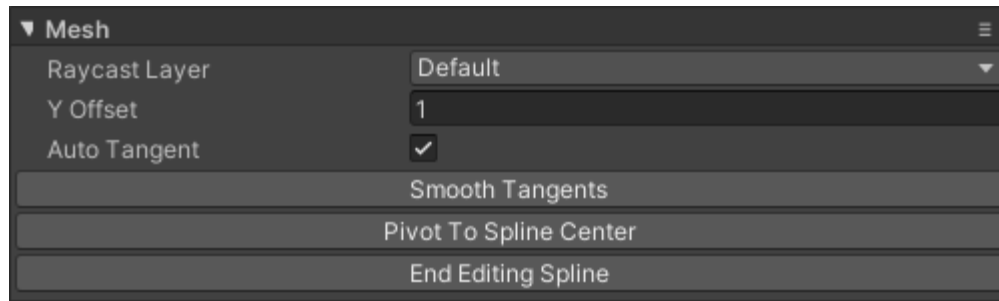


This mode allows you to create water meshes that follow a spline to form rivers and streams. The flow is not constrained to XZ-plane, but in any direction. Branching is also possible but will need some adjustment to hide the intersection.

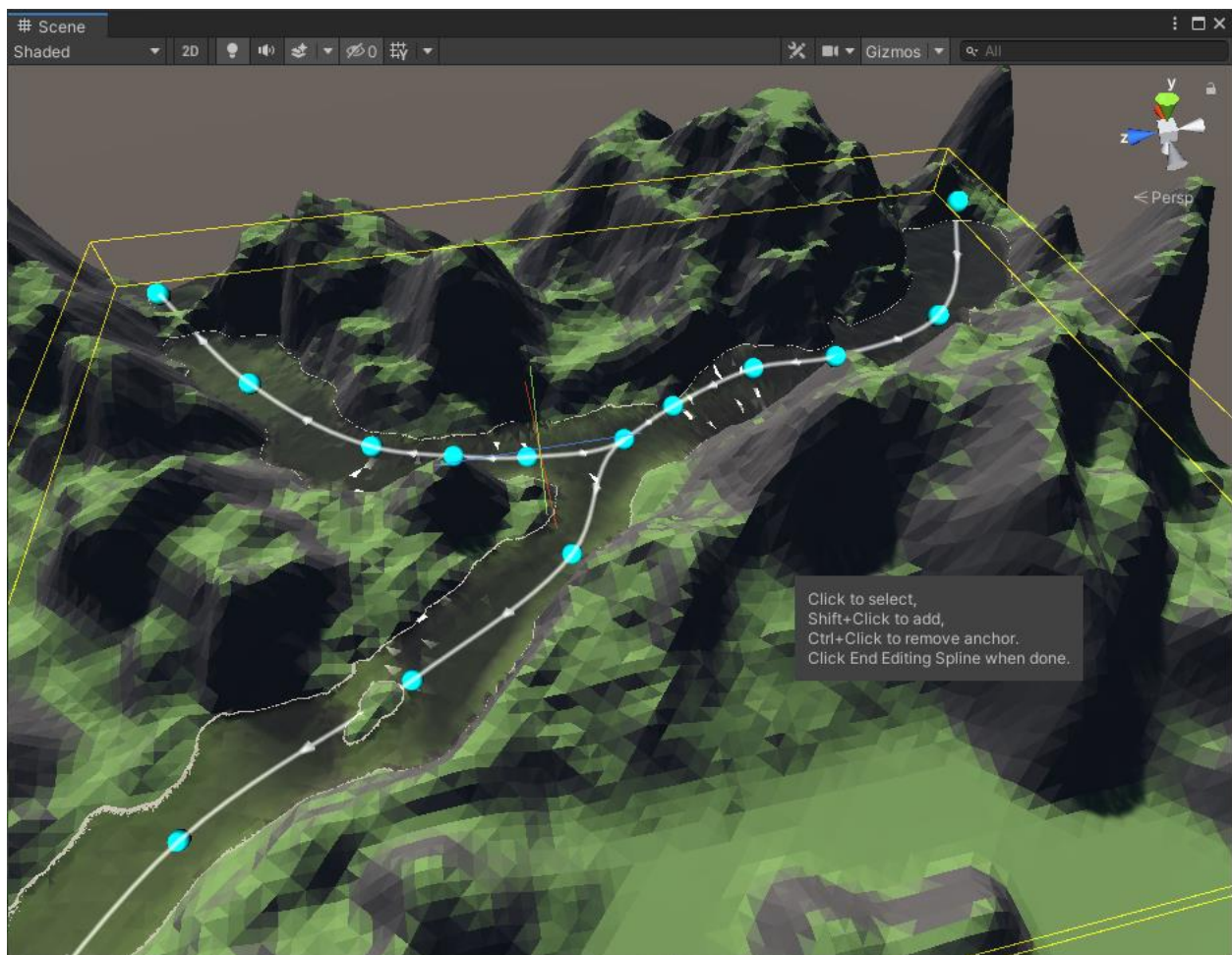
- Resolution X/Y: Resolution of each segment mesh.

- Width: Width of the spline.

To edit the spline, click on **Edit Spline**.



- Raycast Layer: Which object layer to perform raycast.
- Y Offset: Move the newly added anchor along Y axis by this value.
- Auto Tangent: Smooth the spline when it is modified.



In the Scene View, use **Shift+Left Mouse** to add anchors. A segment will be created to connect the newest and the previous anchor.


Use **Ctrl+Left Mouse** on an anchor or segment to remove it.

Use **Left Mouse** on an anchor or segment to select it.

By selecting an anchor, you'll be able to use the builtin transform tool (W-E-R keys) to move, rotate or scale it. Its transformation is also shown in the Inspector. You can't rotate an anchor when Auto Tangent is on.

▼ Selected Anchor						
Position	X	0.8704529	Y	-1.623279	Z	-12.50149
Rotation	X	0.1910766	Y	329.1938	Z	1.000522e-0
Scale	X	0.912525	Y	0.912525	Z	0.912525

By selecting a segment, you'll be able to adjust its tangents using the gizmos, when Auto Tangent is NOT on. Its properties are also shown in the Inspector. The tiny arrow in the middle of the segment indicates its flow path, and will affect Auto Tangent functionality.

▼ Selected Segment						
Start Tangent	X	-24.21367	Y	-1.410668	Z	4.299387
End Tangent	X	-28.14332	Y	-0.5680363	Z	12.25008
Resolution Multiplier Y						1

- Resolution Multiplier Y: Increase or decrease mesh resolution of a specific segment along its path.

You can add a branch by selecting an anchor, then Shift+Left Mouse on another location.

Similarly, you can connect 2 anchors manually by selecting an anchor, then Shift+Left Mouse on the other anchor.

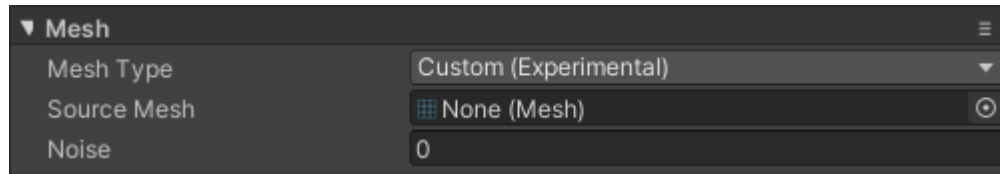
NOTE: Anchors and tangents position are in local space.

Click on **End Editing Spline** when done.

You can use the transform gizmos to move, rotate and scale the whole spline at once.

Custom (Experimental)

This mode allows you to render the water using custom mesh. Useful when you need the mesh to be carefully crafted. However, shader features are quite limited.



- Source Mesh: The mesh to copy data from. Vertex position will be remapped to 0-1 range, so you need to scale it using the Transform component to fit in the scene.
- Noise: Adding some random noise to vertex position.

Rendering

Contains lighting and rendering settings.

- Material: The current material used to render water.
- Queue Index: Render order of the water.
- Light Model: Select light model, including Physical Based, Blinn Phong and Lambert.
- Flat Lighting: If turned on, light will be evaluated per-triangle instead of per-pixel, to create a crispy polygonal look.
- Render Back Face: Should it render water when the camera is under water level. Check this on when using underwater effect.



Time

Control the time parameter that used to animate the water.

- Time Mode: Select Auto to the water will animate itself. Select Manual if you want to set its time with custom script, useful when making a multiplayer game where the water animation need to be sync across clients.
- Time: The current time value. To set value for this in Manual mode, use ManualTimeSeconds property.

You can retrieve the current time value by calling `water.GetTimeParam()`.

Colors

Control water color tinting and lighting model.

- Color: Shallow water color.
- Depth Color: Deep water color. This requires Light Absorption to be enabled.
- Specular Color: Specular reflection color.
- Smoothness: Control the shininess of the water surface.

Fresnel

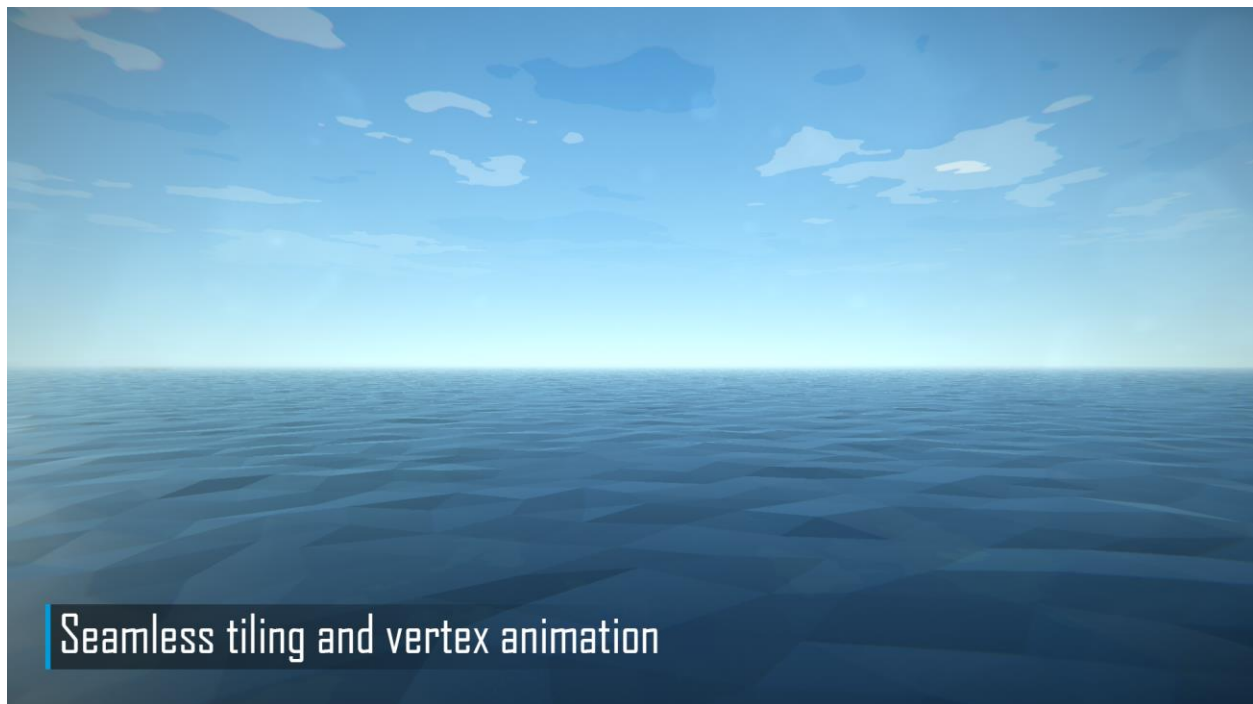
Control the fresnel factor, which is used to blend between reflection and refraction.

- Strength: Higher value means more reflection, less refraction.
- Bias: Offset the fresnel value.

Ripple

Simulate small movements across the water surface.

- Height: Height of the ripple.
- Speed: Speed of the ripple.
- Scale: Scale of the ripple pattern.

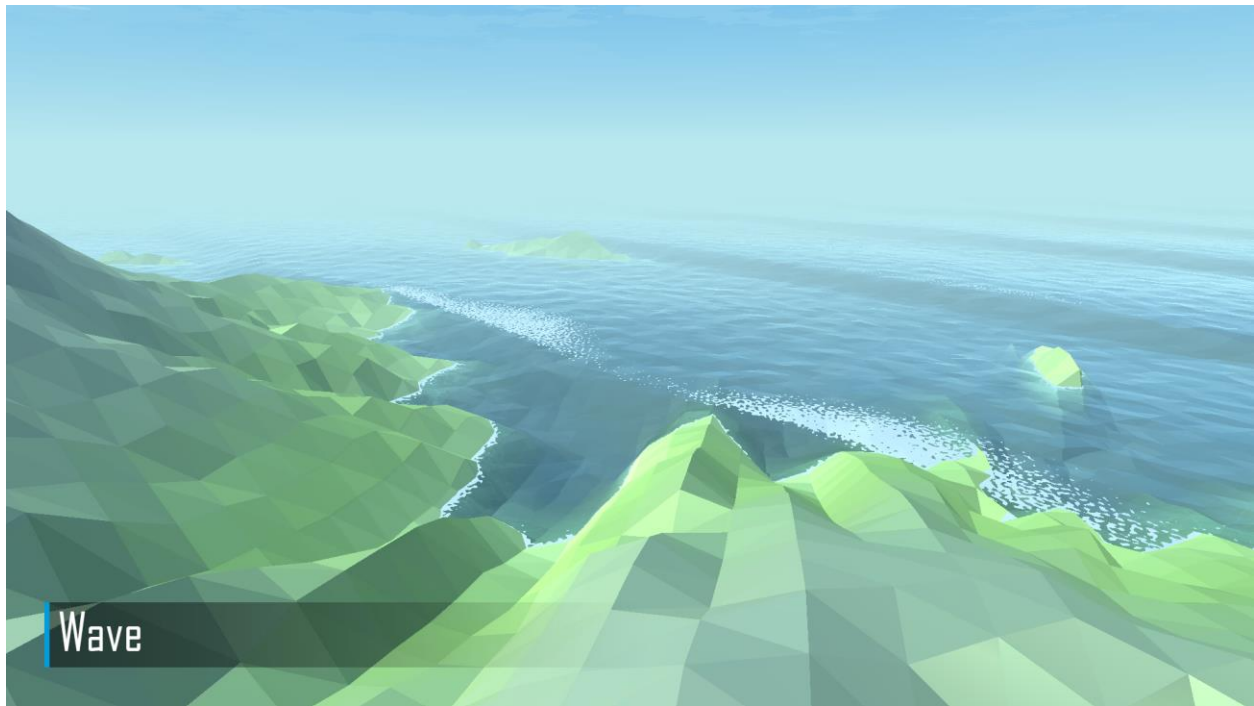


Wave

Simulate one direction wave effect.

- Enable: Enable the effect or not.

- Direction: Movement direction of the waves, in degree.
- Speed: Movement speed of the waves.
- Height: Height of the waves.
- Length: Distance between 2 waves.
- Steepness: Higher value will push the wave crests forward.
- Deform: Add some random deformation to the waves.
- Use Mask: Whether to use Wave Mask texture or not.
- Visualization: Visualize the mask in the scene view.
- Bounds: Define the region to apply the Wave Mask texture, in world space.
- Mask: The mask texture, RG reserved for later use, B is crest intensity, A is wave height.



Light Absorption

Simulate the effect that objects become darker when light travels through the deep surface of the water.

- Enable: Enable the effect or not.
- Depth Color: Color of the deep water.
- Max Depth: The depth where it becomes darkest color.

Foam

Simulate foam/shoreline effect where water intersects with other objects, on wave crest or when water flow from higher to lower place such as waterfall.

- Enable: Enable the effect or not.
- High Quality: Toggle high quality foam mode.
- Scale/Speed: Define the foam noise.
- Color: Foam color.

Shoreline Foam

- Distance: Distance from the intersection point where foam is visible.
- Strength: Intensity of shoreline foam.

Crest Foam

- Max Depth: Maximum depth of the water body where crest foam is visible. (Crest usually appear near the shore, not on deep ocean)
- Strength: Intensity of crest foam.

Slope Foam

- Distance: Distance between 2 foam strips.
- Flow Speed: How fast the foam move..
- Strength: Intensity of slope foam.

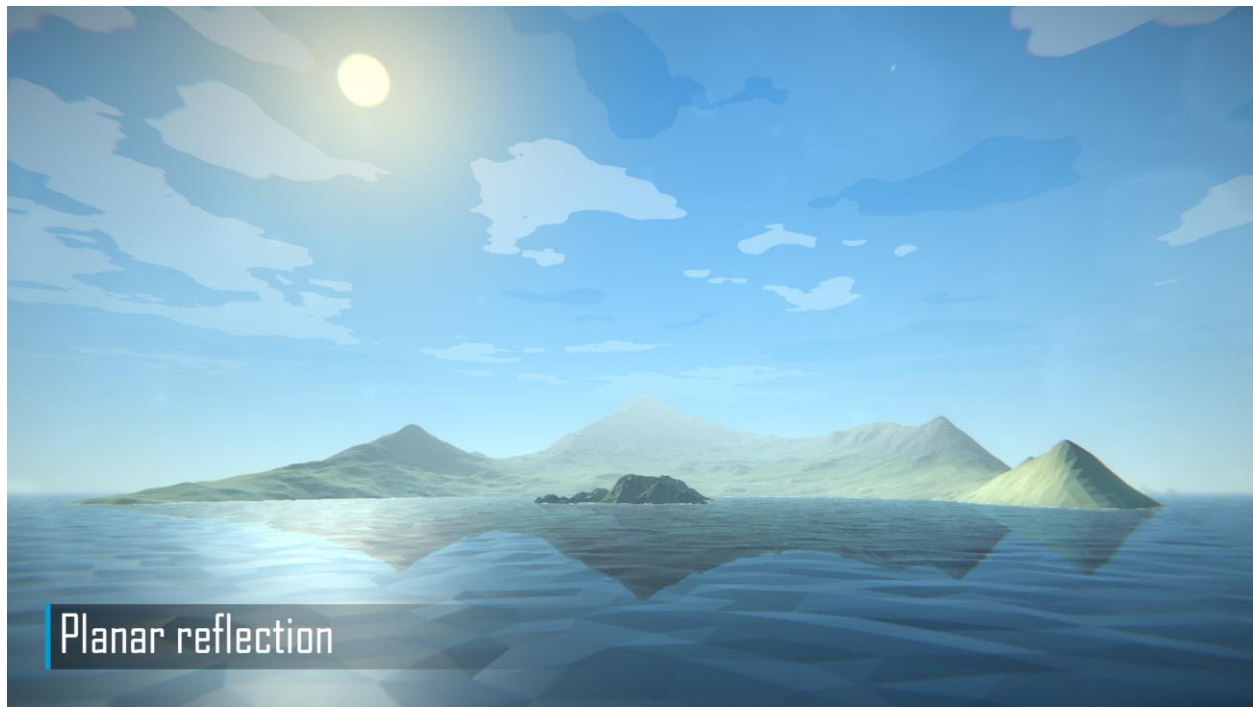


Light absorption, Foam and Caustic

Reflection

Simulate planar reflection effect.

- Enable: Enable the effect or not.
- Custom Skybox: Check to reflect custom skybox of the camera (Skybox component).
- Pixel Light: Should it render reflection texture with pixel light? Turn off to save performance.
- Blur: Adding a slight blur effect to reflection texture, for better quality when using a low resolution reflection.
- Clip Plane Offset: Offset the reflection camera to hide the “gap”.
- Reflection Layer: Objects in these layers will be reflected.
- Resolution: Resolution of the reflection texture.
- Distortion: Adding some distortion to the reflected image.



Refraction

Simulate refraction effect where light ray gets bent when entering the water volume.

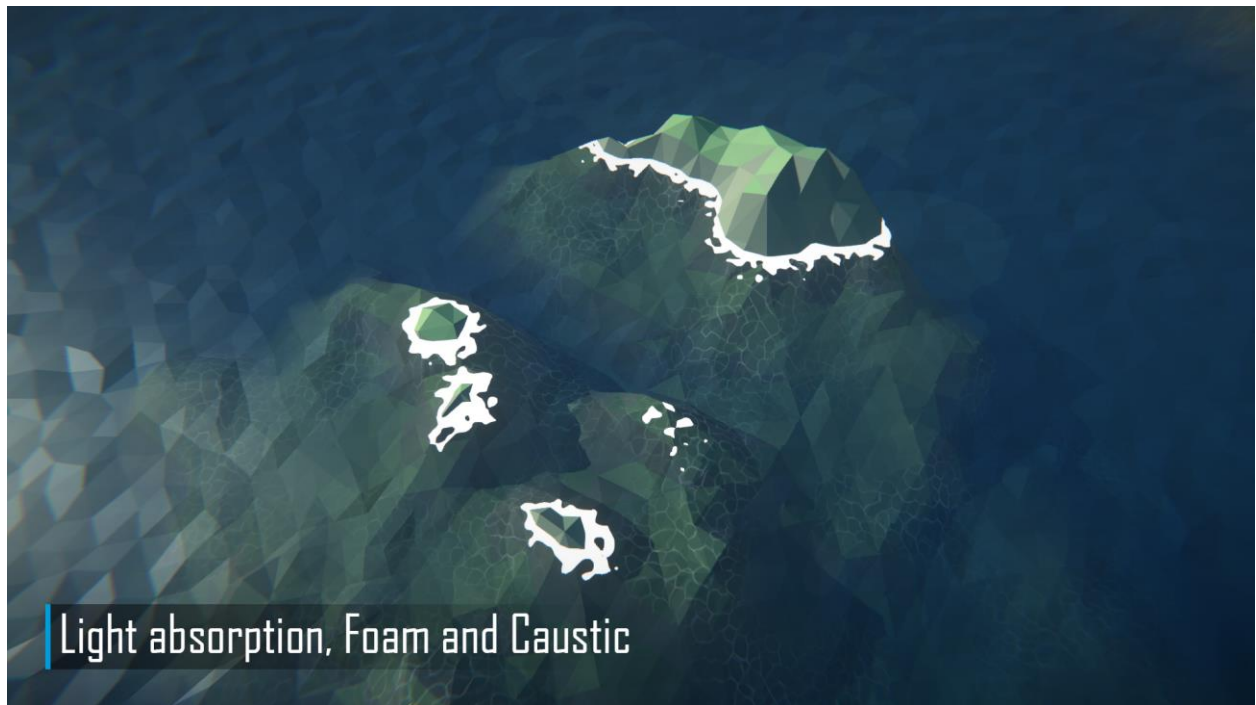
- Enable: Enable the effect or not.
- Distortion: Adding some distortion to the refracted image.



Caustic

Simulate the projection of light rays onto the underwater surface.

- Enable: Enable the effect or not.
- Texture: The caustic image. A seamless/tileable one is recommended.
- Size: Size of the caustic image in world space.
- Strength: Strength of the effect.
- Distortion: Add some distortion to the caustic image.



Aura 2 Integration

This section adds support for Aura 2 volumetric light and fog.

You need Aura 2 to be imported in your project. Only support Builtin RP (as Aura does).

- Apply Fog: Apply volumetric fog to the water plane.
- Apply Lighting: Apply volumetric lighting to the water plane.
- Lighting Factor: Intensity of the volumetric lighting.

ADDING WATER EFFECTS

Water Effect adds underwater fog and lens wetness to your camera. Note that these effects only apply in Play mode and built games.

Water Effect only works for the main camera.

Installing additional packages

To use water effects, you have to install the following packages using the Package Manager:

For Builtin Render Pipeline:

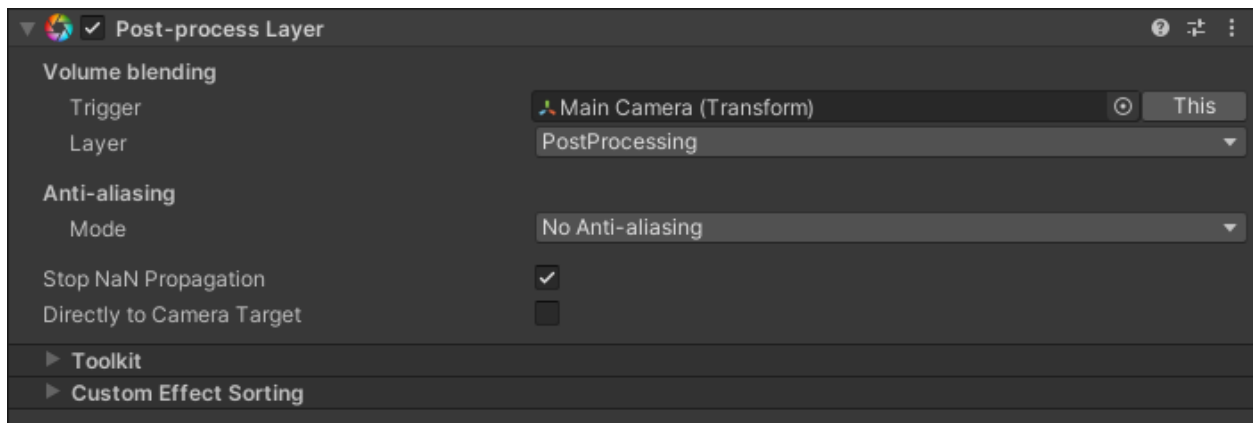
- Post Processing Stack V2 (**com.unity.postprocessing**)

For Universal Render Pipeline:

- Universal RP (**com.unity.render-pipelines.universal**)

Setup for Builtin RP

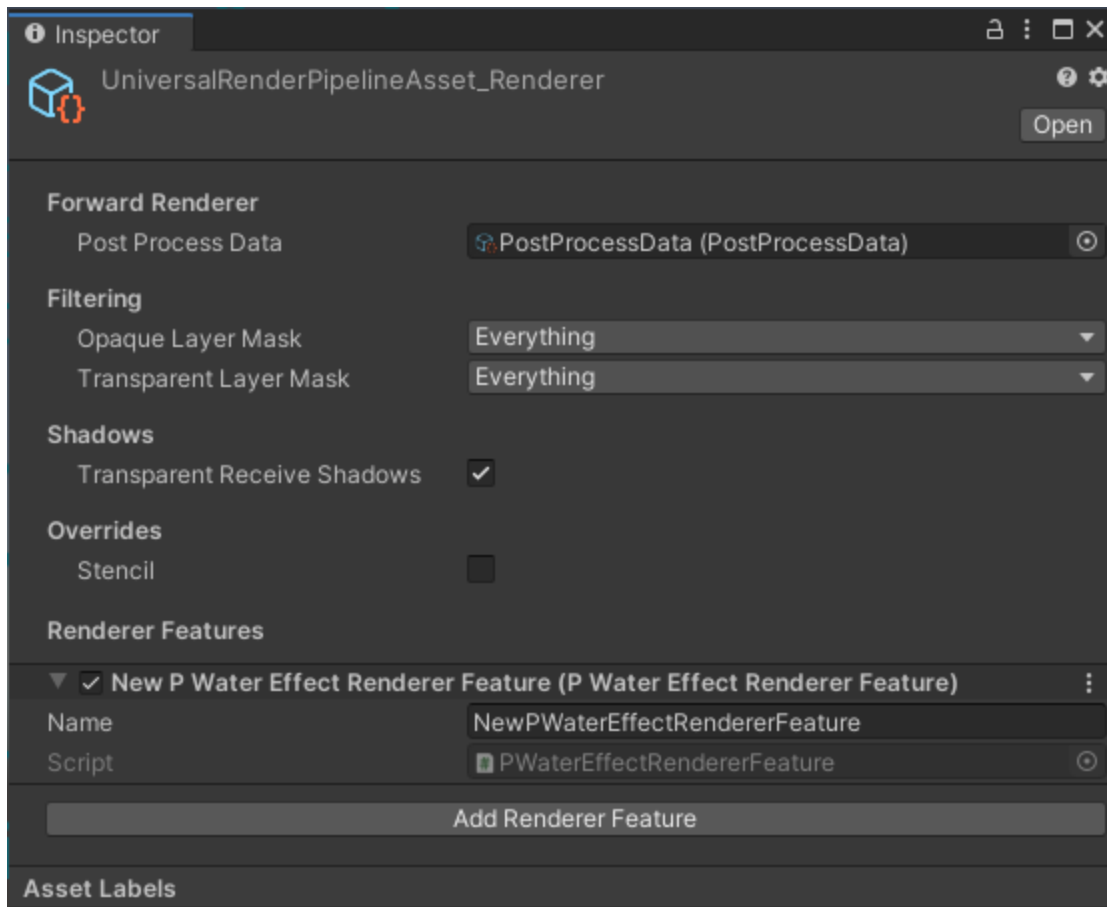
After installing the Post Processing Stack V2, select your main camera and add a Post-process Layer component:



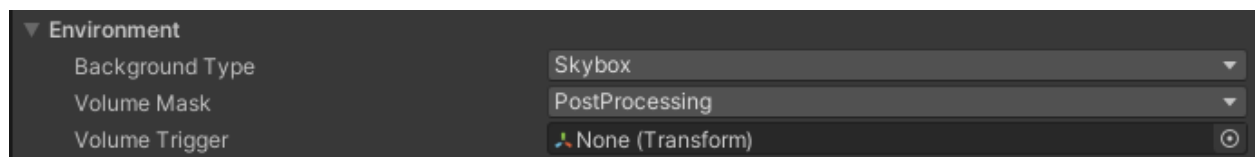
Then, select a Layer for volume blending.

Setup for Universal RP

Select your Universal Render Pipeline Asset, then add a “Water Effect Renderer Feature” to its active renderer:

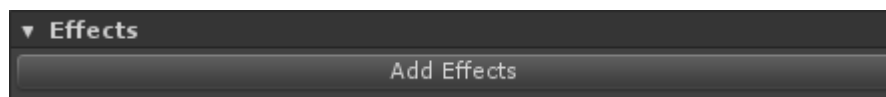


Then, select your Main Camera and set Volume Mask to a desired value.

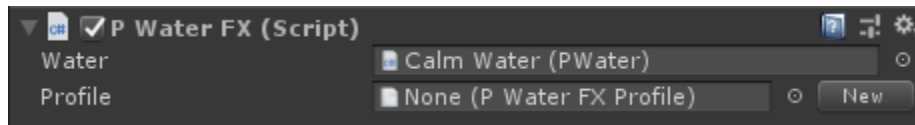


Add Water Effect component

To add water effect controller, select the water game object, in the Inspector, under Effect foldout, click Add Effects:



A new component will be added to the game object:

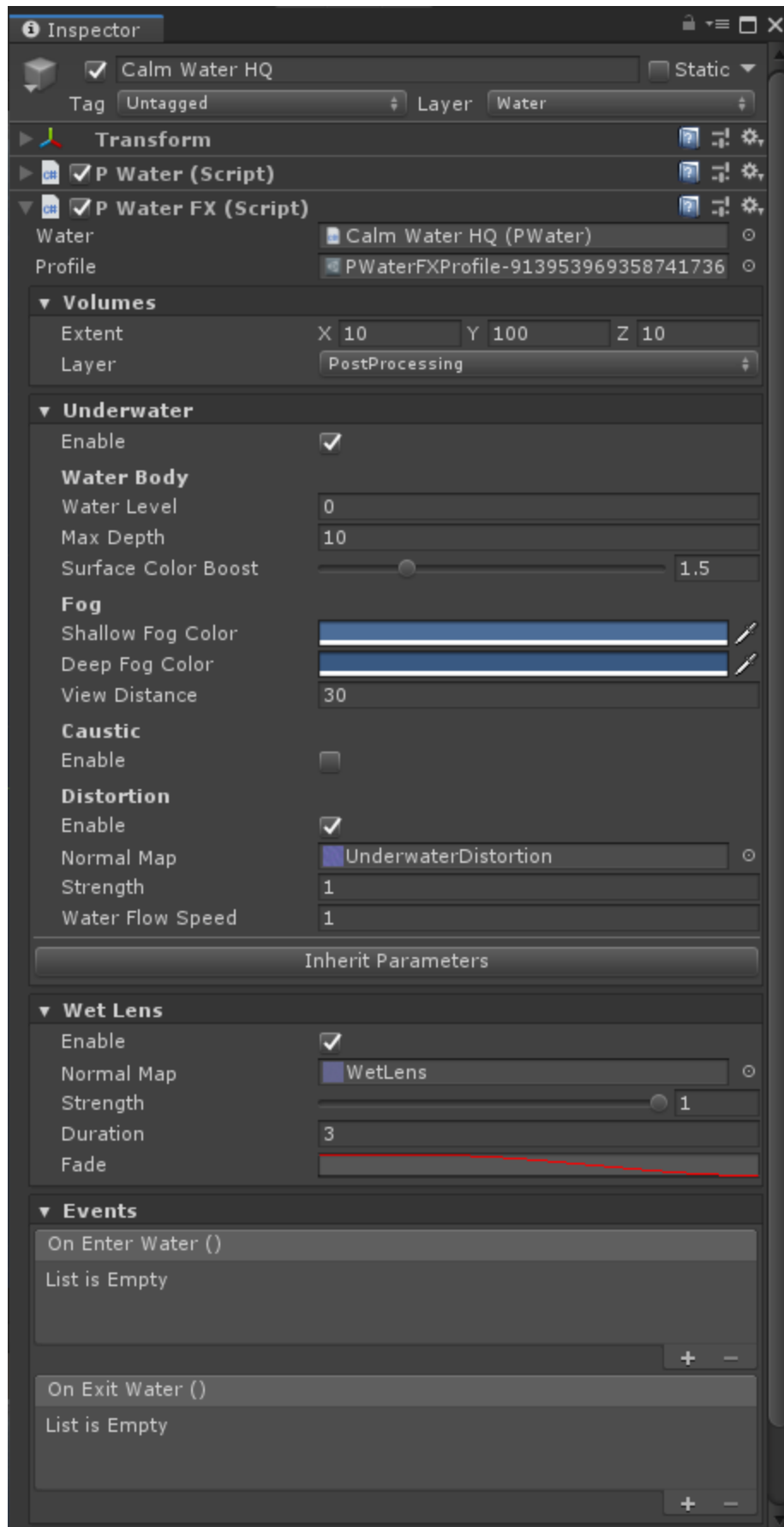


Water FX Profile is an asset type containing effect configs to share across your project. You can create one by right click on the Project window, go to Create>Poseidon>Water FX Profile.

Drop your FX Profile into the Profile slot if you already have one, or simply click on New button to create a new one.

You should store the FX Profile in an appropriate directory for reusing later.

After that, the Inspector should look like this:



Volumes

Contains configurations for spawning post processing volumes

- Extent: Define size of the volume box by extent its water bounding box. This value will be added to the bounding box size. Too small value will cause glitch or unexpected behaviours because the camera goes outside of the volume too soon. Use the Scene view to see where your volume will be.
- Layer: Layer of the volume. **Make sure it matches with the Layer value set on your Post-process Layer or your camera volume mask.**

Underwater



Adding underwater fog, caustic and distortion.

- Enable: Enable the effect or not.

Water Body:

- Water Level: Level of the water plane in world space. Usually use the game object Y position.

- Max Depth: Maximum depth where it becomes darkest.
- Surface Color Boost: Increase the intensity of water plane color (backface).

Fog:

- Shallow Fog Color: Fog color near the water plane.
- Deep Color Fog: Fog color when going deeper.
- View Distance: Maximum distance which object can be seen.

Caustic:

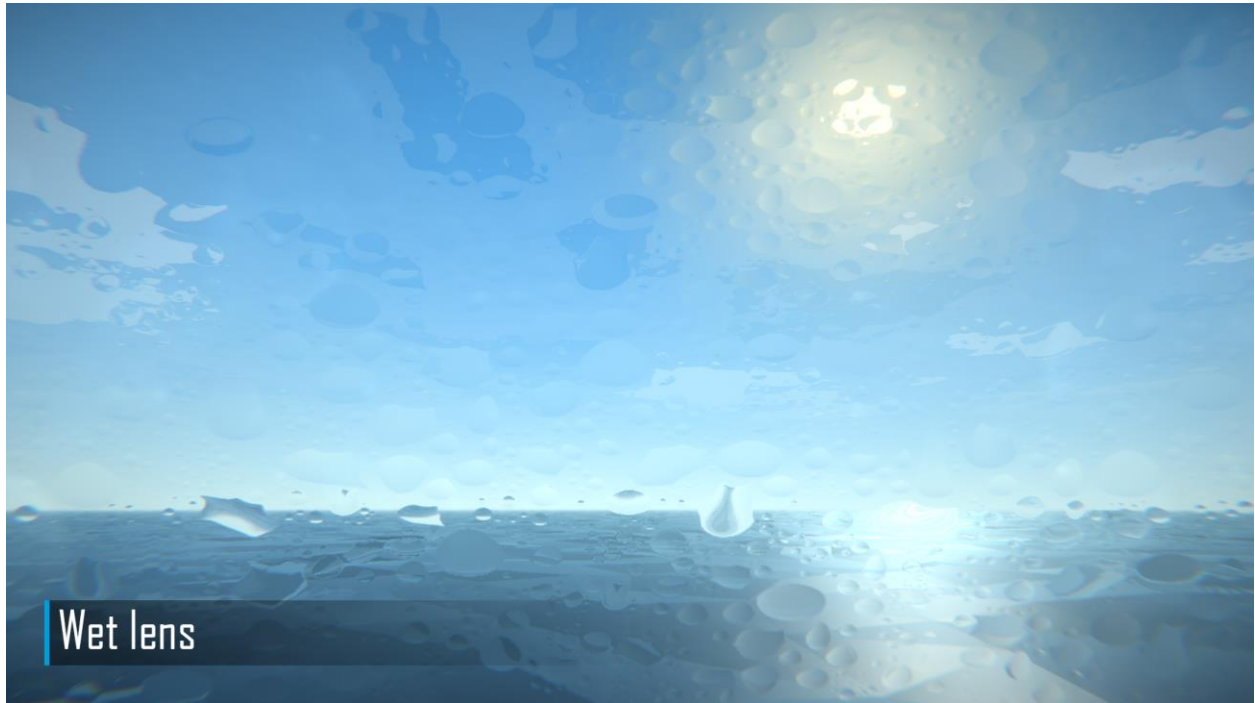
- Enable: Enable caustic or not.
- Texture: Caustic texture.
- Size: Size of caustic pattern in world space.
- Strength: Control caustic intensity.

Distortion:

- Enable: Enable distortion or not.
- Normal Map: Distortion texture, where distort vectors are stored in RG channel, which will be remapped from [0,1] to [-1,1] in shader code.
- Strength: How much the object is distorted.
- Water Flow Speed: How fast the water flows. This will make objects to be distorted faster.

You can click on Inherit Parameters to fetch value from the Water component.

Wet Lens



Adding distortion caused by a small droplet on the camera when getting out of water.

- Enable: Enable the effect or not.
- Normal Map: Distortion texture, where distort vectors are stored in RG channel, which will be remapped from $[0,1]$ to $[-1,1]$ in shader code.
- Strength: Intensity of the effect.
- Duration: Fade out duration.
- Fade: How to fade out over time.

Events

Some useful events when getting in or out of water. You can add more stuff such as bubble or splash sound here:

- OnEnterWater: Raise when the main camera get into water (above to below water plane)
- OnExitWater: Raise when the main camera get out of water (below to above water plane)

VR CHECKLIST

Poseidon supports VR, with a reduced features set. Below are details for each render pipeline.

	Builtin RP	Universal RP
Stereo Render Mode	Single Pass Instanced.	
Basic shader features (Lighting, color, specular, smoothness, etc.)	Yes	Yes
Fresnel	Yes	Yes
Ripple	Yes	Yes
Light Absorption	Yes	Yes
Foam	Yes	Yes
Planar Reflection	No	No
Refraction	No	Yes
Caustic	Yes	Yes
Post Processing (Underwater, wet lens, etc.)	No	No

PERFORMANCE TIPS

Poseidon is highly optimized. However, it's necessary to achieve higher performance on lower end devices. Here are some tip:

- Disable things you don't really need.
- Use URP since these shaders run a bit faster.
- For Mobile, use simpler light models such as Blinn Phong and Lambert.
- Lower mesh resolution, vertex animation takes time!
- Set Mesh Noise to 0 to disable it.
- Disable High Quality Foam
- Don't use Pixel Light for Reflection.
- Lower reflection & refraction texture size.
- Filter out objects which will be rendered to reflection texture using Layers.
- Refraction runs faster in URP since it has downsample options.
- Increase Tile Size and reduce number of tiles, which will reduce draw calls.
- Water FX is not suitable for mobile.

UNIVERSAL RENDER PIPELINE UPGRADE GUIDE

Poseidon also supports the Unity Universal Render Pipeline. Note that render pipeline other than the built-in and URP is not supported. After install and setup URP, the water material will be automatically upgraded, if not, disable and then re-enable the Water component.

Minimum version for URP support: **Unity 2019.3**

RESOLVING PACKAGE DEPENDENCIES

Sometimes compilation errors may occur during the development process due to mis-configuring package dependencies. There are some ways to resolve them:

1. "failed to open source file: Packages/com.unity.render-pipelines.universal/...": This error is from URP water shader, install the render pipeline will solve it. You can ignore this error.
2. "The type PostProcessProfile does not exist": Usually happens when you uninstall the Post Processing Stack V2, or uninstall LWRP/URP. Go to Player Settings, in the Scripting Defined Symbol, remove UNITY_POST_PROCESSING_STACK_V2 symbol.
3. "Namespace UnityEngine.Rendering.LWRP not exist": Go to Window>Poseidon>Project>Update Dependencies to solve this.

TUTORIALS

Creating ocean/open water

For battleship-like games, it's not wise to pin a large number of water tiles to create an ocean, because each tile is considered as an object to render, thus it will take time to cull and render them.

Instead, you can use the Follow Main Camera option combined with Unity fog to fake this sense of open area.

1. Set Mesh Type to Tileable Plane.
2. Set Tile Size to be large enough, 100x100 for example.
3. Turn on Follow Main Camera.
4. Click on Edit Tiles.
5. Hover the mouse in the Scene View, use Shift+Left Mouse to pin some tile **around the water object position**. A grid of 3x3 to 5x5 tiles is enough (that costs 9 to 25 draw calls already, don't pin too much).
6. Open Lighting window and turn on Fog.
7. Adjust the fog so it can cover the water boundary and blend well with the sky horizon.
8. Enter Play mode, then try moving the Main Camera to see it work.

See [this video](#).