

Game Pitch

Course: Compsci 4483B

Title: Only You Can Prevent Forest Fires

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The Premise

National Park campsites provide a great space for families/friends to get outdoors and do some camping. These campsites see thousands of campers per year, and someone has to keep them in line! Your name is Gary Lahey, and you are the park ranger for Yoho National Park one of the most pristine parks in all of Canada. Gary takes his job a little too seriously and is known as somewhat of a “Buzzkill” around the campgrounds, but he doesn’t care. His main goal is to protect and preserve his national park from unruly guests who don’t want to follow National Park guidelines. Gary’s national park duties include putting out campfires, shutting down rowdy campers, confiscating alcohol, checking people’s fishing permits, etc. Make sure your campsite is kept in check and for GOD’S SAKE DON’T LET A FOREST FIRE START!

Player Motivation

The primary objective for the player is to ensure a forest fire “incident” doesn’t occur on his campsite as your ultimate duty as a park ranger is to preserve nature. In addition to this main objective, the player will also have to prevent other “incidents” such as campers being too loud, people fishing without a permit, and confiscating alcohol. The player will be scored based on the “number of days without an incident” they have (this number represents their high score). If an incident occurs then the “number of days without an incident” is reset to 0 and the players high score is saved.

Unique Selling Proposition

The game is different as you are playing a unique role of a park ranger trying to prevent forest fires and other incidents from occurring on your campground. The game is comical in the sense that its making fun of the perceived “buzzkill” attitude of park rangers doing their job. The character’s name is a direct reference to a similar type of character, Jim Lahey from Trailer Park Boys. The title of the game is also a reference to Smokey the Bear’s catchphrase “only you can prevent forest fires”. In addition to the comedic angle of the game, the role/duty of your character is unique. Players can put themselves in the shoes of a park ranger fighting forest fires while also having to balance the “buzzkill” side of the job - telling people what they can and can’t do on the campgrounds.

Competitive Analysis

- **Vacation Adventures (Park Ranger)** – Is a game in the series, Vacation Adventure developed by Casual Arts. This game also puts you in the role of a park ranger but it has a tourist management theme and markets itself as a “hidden object puzzle adventure game.” The gameplay involves a still scene where the user has to interact with objects in the scene to solve the puzzle. In my opinion the game seems very juvenile as it involves a lot of simple puzzles and tasks that wouldn’t be stimulating for adults. The game also seems fairly unknown considering there is very little information on the game online (could not even find a description) and it’s not obvious how or where the game can be purchased.
- **Firewatch** – Is an adventure video game by Campo Santo released in 2016 for PC, Xbox, Playstation and Nintendo Switch. The game has a well-developed plot and storyline that follows a Fire Lookout named Henry that is working a year after the Yellowstone Fires of 1988. Strange things start happening to him and his supervisor which connects to a conspired murder that happened years ago. Other notable aspects of the game include: the first person perspective of the player; the different dialog options given to the player when communicating with your supervisor; the relationship development with your supervisor based on your dialog choices; and the appealing visual style of the game. It is also worth noting that the game was created by the creative leads on The Walking Dead, has sold over a million copies and the game won awards for Best 3D Visual Experience, and Best Narrative. Although this game is popular and well developed it captures a different audience than the game I will be developing. Firewatch is a great adventure game with a flushed out plot and characters while Only You Can Prevent Forest Fires will have a more rushed based narrative where the user must balance multiple tasks and attempt to maintain their high score.
- **Multitask** – Is a puzzle and skill game created and hosted by Armor Games. This game emphasizes the multitasking aspect of the game I will be developing. Multitask involves a user balancing more and more simple tasks as the levels progress. Initially you start by balancing a ball on a platform using the left and right keys, then another pane enters the scene where you have to use the up and down arrows to avoid objects, etc. More and more tasks are added until the user fails one of the tasks. This level progression and multitasking emulates some of the gameplay that will be found in my game. Multitask is fairly popular game created by a large developer and hosted on a popular site, but it feels like a mini game due to its simplistic nature.

Genre

Only You Can Prevent Forest Fires will fall into the Survival and Horror game genre considering you're trying to "survive" or prevent forest fires and other incidents from happening for as long as possible. The "number of days without an incident" will act as your high score for the number of rounds you have survived. The game breaks away from this genre as it doesn't have a horror context, its not based on your player living or dying, and there is no direct enemy such as zombies, instead you have indirect enemies in the campers who are breaking your campground rules and potentially starting fires. Typically, these survival and horror games involve a player fighting waves of enemies until they're overwhelmed, whereas my game will involve a player fighting waves of incidences until it overwhelms the player.

Gameplay

Playing Area

- Campground with multiple campsites interspersed throughout it
- Each campsite is connected using a single dirt road that goes throughout the campgrounds
- Gary Lahey will be able to traverse the campgrounds using the main road and enter any campsite he wants

Heads Up Display (HUD)

- A map of the campground will be displayed in the lower right corner with the option to full screen the map when clicked
- When map is not full screened it will just show the relative location of the player
- The map will tell you where you are located as well as where incidents are occurring on the campground
- A time will be displayed at the top center of the screen indicating how much time is left in the day
- "Number of days without incident" score will be displayed at the top right of the screen

Main Objective

- Throughout the day campsites will attempt to start personal campfires which are not permitted on the campgrounds
- When a campfire starts, the player will have X amount of time to traverse the campsite and tell the campers to put out the fire
- If X amount of time goes by, the campfire will turn into a problem fire which will burn for Y amount of time until a forest fire begins
- If a problem fire begins, the player will have to grab a bucket on the campsite and put out the small fire before it becomes a forest fire and the game is over
- Its worth noting that player movement will slow down when you pick up the bucket

Other Objectives

- There will also be other problems popping up around the campsite
- Although these problems won't start a forest fire, they can lead to an "incident" which results in the game being over
- The player will have Z amount of time to resolve these problems before it becomes an incident
- These problems will have a significantly longer time until they become an incident compared to campfires becoming problem fires, and problem fires becoming forest fires

Story Synopsis

The game takes place in modern day where forest fires are becoming more and more prevalent due to public incompetence. Gary Lahey loves nature and became a park ranger so he could focus all his energy into protecting it. Gary was always known as somewhat of a buzzkill, hall monitor type, and he has brought that same personality to the campgrounds. Despite what people think about him, Gary will stop at nothing to ensure that his campgrounds remain in proper order. He spends all his day putting out metaphorical fires such as rowdy campers, drinking, and fishing without a permit while also battling literal fires on the campground.

Target Market

This game targets those of the millennial and gen z generations who have an understanding of forest fires and how much of a problem they are today. The game acts as somewhat of a PSA to the problem while also approaching the topic from a comedic point of view. Although the main point of the game is to prevent forest fires there are also other objectives that Gary Lahey must solve, giving him a comedic hall monitor persona that everyone has encountered at some point in their life. Because the game is set in North America and follows the campground style format seen there, it will target mainly an English speaking audience that are familiar with this scenario. When considering ESRB rating of the game it would be rated E10+ as the content of the game is not harmful, but the difficulty of the game is recommended for an older audience.

Target Platform

The game will target the PC platform and will be available online similar to games created and hosted by Armor Games. The game will not include an online couple as it is meant to played single player, however high scores may be held online for players to compare.

Summary

I believe that my game Only You Can Prevent Forest Fires is an interesting take on the Park Ranger job and approaches it in a comedic way. The game is unique in the Survival and Horror genre as it focuses on light-hearted content, and doesn't have the typical gameplay of these types of games. I believe the rushed/multitasking nature of the game will challenge and engage users while the simplicity of the game will allow almost anyone to pick it up.