Healing Grounds

Game Design Document

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Game Summary:

Healing Grounds is a third-person exploration and environmental restoration game where players walk through post-apocalyptic landscapes to clean, repair, and restore nature. With no combat, the game focuses on peaceful tasks like cleaning polluted areas and helping communities, allowing players to witness a dynamic transformation of the world as they progress.

The goal is to create a meditative, fulfilling experience as players bring life back to a broken world.

Special Focus: Carpathian Mountains Restoration

In *Healing Grounds*, one of the key regions for restoration is based on the real-world Carpathian Mountains of Ukraine. This region has suffered from illegal deforestation, leading to environmental damage and loss of wildlife. The player's mission in this biome is to restore the forest by planting new trees, preventing further logging, and protecting the local ecosystem.

Players will learn about the real-world problem of deforestation through in-game facts and narrative elements. They will also engage in actions such as replanting trees and dismantling illegal logging operations, helping to restore the Carpathians to their natural beauty. As players progress, they will witness the return of wildlife and the rejuvenation of the land.

Core Gameplay:

Players explore vast, open environments, undertaking volunteer tasks such as cleaning waste, planting trees, and fixing broken infrastructure. Every task contributes to the restoration of the world, with immediate visual and auditory feedback to show the positive impact of their work.

Exploration is key, with new tools and areas unlocking as players progress, all while enjoying a serene, atmospheric experience without combat.

Aim of the Game:

The aim of *Healing Grounds* is to create a deeply relaxing and fulfilling experience where players feel empowered to make a positive impact on the environment. The game focuses on restoration, responsibility, and transformation, as players' actions actively improve the world around them.

Game Design Goals:

1. **Environmental Restoration:** Emphasize environmental awareness and responsibility through mechanics that allow players to actively improve and restore natural landscapes.

2. **Non-Combat, Relaxing Gameplay:** Offer a peaceful, combat-free experience focused on meditative exploration and problem-solving.

3. **Dynamic World Transformation:** Provide immediate, tangible feedback to the player's actions, allowing them to visually witness their impact on the world, fostering a sense of accomplishment.

Features:

- **Environmental Cleanup:** Players use a variety of tools to clean waste, clear pollution, and repair broken infrastructure.

- **Dynamic World Changes:** The environment visibly improves with each task completed - plants regrow, wildlife returns, and the world becomes alive again.

- **Non-Linear Exploration:** Players explore large open-world areas at their own pace, with no time limits or combat.

- **Upgradable Tools:** Players unlock and upgrade new tools that allow them to tackle more difficult restoration tasks.

- **Community Engagement:** Players interact with NPCs who represent various communities, assisting them with tasks to rebuild their lives.

Player Mechanics:

- **Environmental Interaction:** Players can clean up litter, purify water, plant trees, and repair structures.

- **Tool Usage:** Players use and upgrade tools such as litter grabbers, water purifiers, and reforestation kits.

- **Exploration:** Players walk through expansive, beautiful landscapes, uncovering hidden areas and solving traversal challenges.

- **Inventory Management:** Players manage their tools and resources, using eco-friendly equipment to complete tasks.

Game World:

The world in *Healing Grounds* takes place on Earth after it has been damaged by pollution and neglect. Places that used to be full of life - like cities, forests, and lakes - are now filled with trash and broken buildings.

The environment looks sad and empty at first, but as players help clean it up, the world slowly starts to come back to life. Trees grow back, animals return, and everything looks fresh and healthy again.

The world changes as you play, starting off dull and damaged, but becoming more colorful and lively with each good deed you do. You'll explore different areas like forests, lakes, mountains, and old cities, each needing your help to be restored to its natural beauty.

Carpathian Mountains Restoration:

In *Healing Grounds*, players will be able to explore an area inspired by the Carpathian Mountains in Ukraine. The biome will feature lush forests, steep mountains, and rushing rivers, but much of it will be damaged due to illegal logging and deforestation. The player's goal is to plant new trees, prevent further deforestation, and protect the area's wildlife.

Gameplay Elements:

- **Tree Planting:** Players can reforest large areas of the Carpathians by planting saplings in the damaged regions. This is a simple but powerful action that can restore the beauty of the environment.
- **Illegal Logging Encounters:** Players will encounter illegal logging operations. They will have to stop them by dismantling logging camps or setting up monitoring systems to prevent further deforestation.
- **Wildlife Conservation:** By restoring the forest, players will see animals like bears, wolves, and deer return to their natural habitat. The more trees they plant, the more the wildlife will thrive.
- **Awareness and Education:** Throughout the game, players will find environmental facts and stories about the real-world deforestation crisis in the Carpathian Mountains. This will help players understand the real-life impact of illegal deforestation and the importance of protecting this region.
- **Real-World Integration:** The game can partner with organizations that focus on reforestation efforts in Ukraine. Players could learn how their in-game actions reflect ongoing conservation projects in the Carpathians. There could even be opportunities to donate or participate in real-world campaigns that help plant trees in the region.

Characters:

- **The Volunteer (Player):** A lone traveler dedicated to environmental restoration. The player serves as a neutral figure with no spoken dialogue, allowing players to project themselves onto the character.

- **NPCs (Non-Playable Characters):** Communities affected by environmental disasters, each offering their own story and quests to assist with rebuilding their town or restoring their land.

Enemies:

- **Environmental Hazards:** Instead of traditional enemies, players face natural obstacles like toxic waste zones, unstable terrain, and hazardous weather. These hazards require strategic planning and the use of appropriate tools to navigate or neutralize.

Levels:

The game world is divided into expansive open-world regions, each representing a different biome or urban environment that the player needs to restore.

These areas are interconnected and can be freely explored, but each region presents unique environmental challenges and tasks.

As players complete key tasks, new areas unlock, offering fresh landscapes and restoration challenges.

User Interface (UI):

- **HUD:** Minimalistic, with simple indicators for player health (stamina), tool durability, and a mini map showing points of interest.

- **Inventory:** A clean, easy-to-navigate tool management system where players can select and upgrade equipment.

- **Progress Tracker:** A visual representation of the player's restoration progress in each area, showing how much of the environment has been cleaned and repaired.

Player Experience:

Making the World Better: In *Healing Grounds*, players feel proud because they're helping the planet. By cleaning up trash and fixing damaged places, they get to see the world change from dirty and sad to clean and beautiful. Every time they do something good, the game shows how they've made a difference, which feels really rewarding.

Giving "Green Thumbs" to Each Other: When players visit areas that others have fixed, they can give a **"Green Thumb"** to say, "Good job!" It's like giving a thumbs-up on social media. This helps players feel appreciated and shows that everyone is working together to make the world better. The more **Green Thumbs** a place gets, the more it grows and improves!

Helping in the Real World: The cool thing is, the more **Green Thumbs** players give in the game, the more they help the real world. The game will work with real-life groups to plant trees or clean up parks based on how many Green Thumbs players give. So, playing the game not only helps the virtual world but also helps our real planet!

Fun Challenges for the Environment: Players can do real-world challenges like recycling or picking up trash, and when they complete these, they unlock special rewards in the game. This encourages them to help both in the game and in real life, making them feel good about their actions.

Working Together, Not Competing: Instead of trying to beat each other, players work together. There aren't any winners or losers. Everyone's goal is to help restore the world. The more players help each other by giving Green Thumbs, the better the world becomes.

Being Part of Something Big: Players will feel like they are part of a big mission to save the Earth. When they see how their efforts in the game are tied to real-world changes, they'll feel proud knowing they're making a difference.

Feeling Appreciated: Whether they're giving **Green Thumbs** or receiving them, players will always feel good knowing they've helped restore the world. It's all about teamwork, sharing, and helping each other—and the planet!

Player Experience (with Real-World Integration):

1. **Real-World Tree Planting and Conservation:**

   Every time a player gives or receives a "Green Thumb," it could be tied to real-world environmental initiatives like tree planting or habitat restoration. Partnering with environmental organizations or charities, the game could contribute to real-world efforts based on in-game interactions.

   - **How it works:** For every X number of likes (e.g., 100 Green Thumbs), the game donates or sponsors the planting of a tree or contributes to a conservation fund. Players could even receive updates on these real-world actions via in-game notifications or special events that show the total community impact.

   - **Impact:** Players will feel their in-game actions contribute to actual environmental healing, giving them a sense of pride and motivating them to keep playing.

2. **Eco-Friendly Challenges and Rewards:**

   Create special in-game events or challenges where players can earn Green Thumbs by participating in real-world eco-friendly activities, like recycling, beach cleanups, or reducing plastic use.

   - **How it works:** Players can log their real-world actions within the game or through partnered apps that track environmental efforts (like measuring the amount of plastic reduced or trash collected). In return, they could earn in-game likes or Renewal Tokens that boost their progress in restoring virtual areas.

   - **Impact:** This encourages players to take positive action in their everyday lives while reinforcing the game's core message of environmental restoration.

3. **Augmented Reality (AR) and Geo-Tagged Green Spaces:**

   Use AR technology to let players find real-world "green spots" in their area—such as parks, gardens, or eco-friendly zones—where they can give or receive Green Thumbs in the real world. This could turn the game into an educational and community-building experience, driving players to visit and care for real nature spots. *Example:* ([GreenSpaces | R3GIS | Manage Your Spaces Efficiently](#))

   - **How it works:** Players can explore local areas with the game's AR mode to give or receive likes in real-world green spaces. Visiting specific locations might unlock special rewards, and players could be encouraged to leave actual feedback about the cleanliness or environmental health of those spaces. The game could even partner with local governments or conservation groups to highlight real-world restoration efforts.

   - **Impact:** This builds a real-world community focused on environmental care while promoting awareness of local green initiatives and areas that need attention.

4. **Social Media Integration for Environmental Awareness:**

Incorporate social media sharing features that allow players to broadcast their in-game environmental work, likes received, and the overall progress of their world restoration efforts, tying it into broader environmental awareness campaigns.

- **How it works:** Players can share their in-game progress (like earning Green Thumbs) with hashtags tied to environmental causes, creating a sense of pride in their digital and real-world eco-conscious actions. These shares can link to environmental organizations, fundraisers, or awareness movements, allowing the game to amplify its impact beyond the screen.

- **Impact:** This spreads environmental awareness and brings attention to causes that tie into the game's themes of restoration and healing.

5. **Community-Led Eco Projects with In-Game Rewards:**

Encourage players to initiate or participate in real-world community restoration projects like cleaning parks, planting trees, or organizing sustainability drives. In-game, players can earn unique rewards like special customization options, boosts in restoration speed, or exclusive badges for these efforts.

- **How it works:** Players can submit proof of participation in local environmental events (through photos or verification with partner organizations), which then unlock special in-game rewards. These could also be linked to the game's like system, where organizing or participating in a cleanup could earn extra Green Thumbs or Echoes for the player's in-game areas.

- **Impact:** This turns in-game rewards into a motivational tool for real-world environmental action, fostering a sense of ownership and contribution.

6. **Collaborations with Environmental Organizations:**

Partner with a non-governmental organization (NGOs) or environmental agencies to host joint events where players' in-game likes help fund specific real-world environmental projects, like reforestation, wildlife protection, or pollution cleanup.

- **How it works:** In certain seasons or events, player likes (Green Thumbs) could convert into real-world donations or support for environmental organizations. For example, the game could run a special "Green Thumb Event" where every like given contributes to a reforestation project. Updates on the progress of the real-world project could be shared in-game, showing players how their engagement is helping to make a real difference.
- **Impact:** This encourages players to engage more deeply with environmental causes while seeing a clear connection between their gameplay and real-world change.

Game Design Pillars:

1. **Environmental Impact:**
   The game's core focus is on environmental restoration. Every player action directly improves the game world, reinforcing the theme of responsibility for the planet.

2. **Relaxing, Non-Combat Gameplay:**
   Designed to offer a calm and peaceful experience, *Path of Service* avoids combat in favor of problem-solving and exploration. Players can engage with the world at their own pace, making it approachable and serene.

3. **Dynamic World Transformation:**
   A key feature of the game is the dynamic, real-time transformation of the environment. Players can see their direct impact, from polluted wastelands to vibrant, restored ecosystems, making their efforts feel meaningful and rewarding.

Game Summary:

Healing Grounds is a third-person environmental exploration and restoration game where players help revive a post-disaster Earth.

The game encourages cooperation and community-building through a unique "Green Thumbs" like system.

With a strong focus on environmental activism, *Healing Grounds* highlights real-world issues like deforestation, especially in the Carpathian Mountains of Ukraine. The game's author, a proud Ukrainian, has drawn inspiration from the environmental challenges of their homeland, making this project not only a game but also a call to action for global and local environmental restoration.

Through meditative, non-combat gameplay, players experience the power of small actions in bringing life back to a broken world.

User Experiences:

- "I love how calming and peaceful this game is—it's like therapy!"
  Players will appreciate the relaxing, meditative gameplay, where every action feels purposeful, and the game's soothing atmosphere provides a sense of inner peace

- "It's amazing to watch the world transform as you clean and restore it!"
  Players will be drawn to the visual and emotional satisfaction of seeing a barren, desolate landscape evolve into something beautiful and alive through their efforts.

- "This game made me think about my own impact on the environment."
  The environmental restoration theme will resonate with players, encouraging them to reflect on their real-world actions.