FROSTWOOD CHRONICLES

Game Design Document

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BACKSTORY

The world has been hit by apocalyptic weather shifts. Electrical grids have fallen, and society has been thrown into chaos. You play as a group of survivors stranded in a barren snowy wilderness. With cities having fallen to rebellions, looting, and human infighting, the wilderness appears to be the safest getaway. But with the colder climate and the constant threat of wildlife attacks, survival is still a struggle.

What the survivors do not know, is that deep within the woods lies a new threat. An ancient presence lurks within the woods, awoken by the shift in climate. The game begins just days before the survivors first encounter with this presence.

CHARACTERS

Player Characters

The player takes on the role of survivors who are trying to stay alive in the wilderness after having escaped the threat imposed by the cities. The survivors have the basic knowledge to get by but have minimal resources at their disposal. They will have to use whatever survival skills they have to stay alive. With just a tent and basic survival skills at their disposal, will the survivors be able to make it?

The Forest

The wilderness itself can often feel serene and peaceful but the lack of resources on offer is a constant reminder of the threat at the heart of such a calm environment.

The Wildlife and Others

Throughout their survival, the player will encounter a range of wildlife from timid rabbits to dangerous bears. They may even encounter other survivors who have taken to fleeing the cities. Are these other survivors friendly or dangerous? Players will have to make decisions as to how they approach these situations.

The Looming Threat

Something has awoken within the woods, and it is stalking the survivors. With each passing day the presence looms larger over the survivors seeming to envelope them. Noone knows what the threat is, and none have seen it. But they know it is hunting them and that if they do not outrun it, they will die.

GAMEPLAY

Gameplay Mechanics

During the game, the player explores a variety of tiles to find resources and stay alive as long as possible. At each new location the player resolves a randomized encounter event. On any given tile, players can use a series of actions if they have the required resources. For example, eating and drinking requires food and water. Players use up stamina and advance time to move between tiles. If the player ever completes any action or event that would reduce their stamina or mana below 0, they will instead take that loss to their health. Players must balance their resources, exploration, and choices to stay alive.

The game is primarily text based with each event having semi random results based on the players decision. For example, an event where the player encounters sleeping humans may have the options to steal, leave alone, or befriend. If the player chooses to steal, the result may end in some health loss as the humans wake up and fight back. It could also result in a success for the player where they get away with the resources. Each result will have internal chance values.

		Survival Gains and Losses Mapping
Actions	Gain	Cost
Time	Score/Win State	Hunger/Thirst/Stamina
Travel	Exploration/Mapping	Stamina & Time
Salvage	Resources % Chance	Time
Camp/Sleep	Stamina	Time
Heal	Health	Mana
Eat	Max Mana Restore	Resources
Drink	Mana Restore	Resources
Events	Gain	Cost
Fight Encounter	Meat	Health % Chance
Crates	Resources % Chance	Time
Sleeping Humans	Resources % Chance	Health % Chance
	ADD ENCOUNTERS TO EXPAND OUT GAME AND CHALLENGE	

Game Flow

The general game flow can be seen in the flow chart below. Players move from tile to tile making decisions at each tile. A series of actions is available to players on every tile. When moving to a new tile players will resolve an event before continuing.

The end game state is triggered by moving between tiles and encountering the presence. Players must try and stay alive long enough to be able to defeat the presence. The presence will hunt them as they move between the tiles. The players must try and build up their strength to slowly weaken the presence.

Diagram Key
- Gain
- Loss
- Player Driven
- System Check

Victory Conditions

At the start of the game the presence has a 0% chance of showing up. However, every time the player explores a new tile or sleeps (progresses time), the chance will increase by 10%. Once the presence is triggered it will be given a "distance" from the player. As the player moves from tile to tile, they are attempting to run from the presence. Text clues will provide information to the player as to if the presence is close. If the player encounters the presence, they will take some damage and be provided the option to flee or continue fighting. When the player successfully flees the presence will once again be placed a "distance" from the player. This repeats until either the player beats the presence, or the player dies. Each successful fight action will lower the presences strength. If the player completely diminishes the strength of the presence entirely, they will defeat the presence and win the game. If the player ever dies the game ends and the player must start a new game.

GAME WORLD

The world the players explore is a barren snowy wasteland. Each tile will feature one of a variety of backgrounds from the world. Some concepts for backgrounds are shown on this page.

Camera

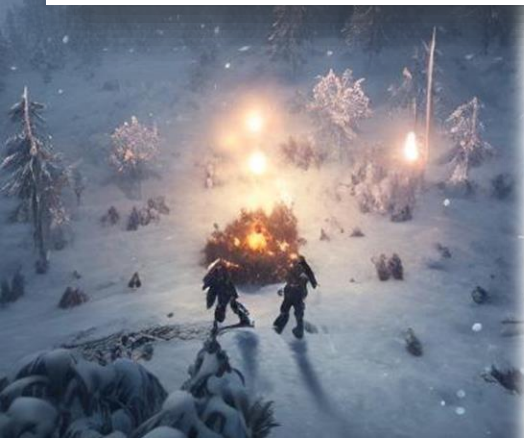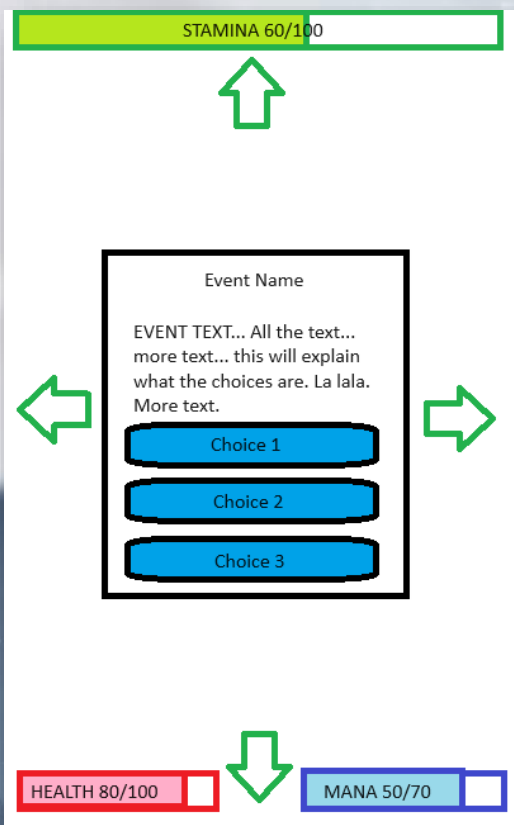The camera perspective is top down with each tile being a stationary snapshot of the surrounding area.

UI/UX

A mock up of the UI can be seen to the left. This would overlay the background environments. After event completion the text will disappear revealing the character sprites. Some events may include additional sprites within the scene (A cabin, bear, etc...) An idea for tile actions is to press and hold near the centre of the screen which would then open a radial menu. Players would then select the action they want from there.

Level Design

The map layout will be stored within a map array. The starting player location will be randomized within that map. Events will also be random. Arrows will be removed where travel is not possible. To start, the map will be a 10x10 grid with some map locations being inaccessible creating a mazelike structure. Additional maps could be added to change up the layout, though this is not a priority.

STAMINA 60/100

Event Name

EVENT TEXT... All the text... more text... this will explain what the choices are. La lala. More text.

Choice 1

Choice 2

Choice 3

HEALTH 80/100

MANA 50/70

BONUS MATERIALS

The initial goal for development is that fights will have a random outcome. However, in future builds combat could switch to incorporating a traditional turn-based combat system. This would allow for more player skill/agency and apply a greater strain on mana use. In this build, there would also be added weapons and armor as salvageable goods that the player could use to increase their survivability in combat encounters.

For the initial build, events will also have random outcomes. In later builds there should be a stat system to improve the odds at certain events. For example, a character with higher perception would have improved odds when scavenging. Stats would be picked at the start of the game and the incorporation of a leveling system would allow for players to further customize their character as the game progresses. This would also provide the player with additional agency on strengthening themselves for the final encounters with the presence.

Adding in an option to randomize the map layout would also provide some re-playability, though the randomization of the map layout is less necessary with the randomization of the events. This addition is a stretch target but is not a focus. Adding more customized maze layouts is more appealing than full random layouts.

This game will likely be the target for further development, and this is the direction the game would take.

References:

All images in this GDD are meant to be used as concept art and were built using AI from https://openart.ai/.