Dragon Days:

Welcome to Morania

Game Design Concept Document

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1. BROAD CONCEPT:  Space Station 13, but it's Morrowind.  EVERYTHING interactable.  Trees can be cut, cabins can be built, towns can be created.  Tropical island town already exists, needs to be protected, built up, joined, etc.  Survival-style system combined with evolving NPCs to create a "living" town. Basic ruleset for the game world at large will be taken from the Open Gaming License (d20 dice system).

2. IMPORTANT THEMES:

* Immersive!  This will require strong writing!  Not as easy to do with 2D, but still possible.
* Relaxing/satisfying!  The setting is a tropical island for a reason. Think Super Mario Sunshine!

3. STORY CONCEPT:

You (the player) are an adventurer of the high-fantasy world of Nont! Recently, you’ve heard about a wondrous new island nation that has been making waves in the Far South of the Island Belt. Though worried about the dangers of pirates, rival nations, and the deadly ruler of the seas Duroden, you have decided to head to the tropical frontier and make a life for yourself on the magical island of Morania!

(There is a great deal of lore about Morania. A more in depth summary is at the end of this document.)

4. SUMMER GOAL:

Build the MVP.  This means creating the tools and the systems that we will then use to build the open game world.  The tools need to be usable by everyone on the team, so as to allow for the mass-production of open world environments.

(This is how Bethesda makes Elder Scrolls games!)

5. CHECKLIST for MVP:

1. Storyline
   1. Goal: Writing that everyone understands and wants to add onto.
   2. Goal: Immersive world building.
   3. Goal: Main story that creates a backbone for the setting.
2. Landscape development
   1. Goal: Anyone on the team needs to be able to build the open world.
   2. Goal: Every part of environment is interactable.
   3. Goal: Seasonal variance over time.
3. Player Character development
   1. Goal: Martial combat system
   2. Goal: Magic combat system
   3. Goal: Archery combat system
   4. Goal: Full leveling and experience system
   5. Goal: Attributes system
   6. Goal: Skills system
4. NPCs
   1. Goal: Randomly generated townsfolk
   2. Goal: NPCs that interact with one another
   3. Goal: NPCs that fulfil their own needs
5. Questline system development
   1. Goal: Quests with ability to have complex storylines and scripted results.
   2. Goal: Templates for different kinds of possible quests.

Biggest obstacle: ARTWORRRRRRK

While we have the time, we should be testing and experimenting with different art styles. Even if we rely on AI and free assets, there is still a lot of fit and finish to every piece.

The more original artwork, the better!

6. What We Will Need To Build Onto Breaking Red (roughly in priority order, may change):

1. Standardized Managers and Events System:
   1. A universal GameEventsManager?
   2. DiceRollerManager
   3. Other managers?
2. Interactable environment:
   1. Sprites over tilemap, sprites have their own tags/layers as needed
   2. Extended system to allow for unlimited Z-axis levels
   3. Using the Player Character ActivationPoint to pick up/use things
   4. Popups that appear over items.
      1. Clicking on objects around the player should be the equivalent to performing a “spot check” and be affected by dice rolls.
   5. A universal clock tied to the GameEventsManager to provide information for a day/night cycle.
   6. Item health
   7. Item durability
3. Player character:
   1. The player character will keep many features from the Night Run Studios tutorial.
   2. Expanded animations and system for up/down, walk, death
   3. Modular combat system for multiple weapons, different effects
   4. D20 magic system for combat and utility
      1. Built off combat system. Needs to affect environment.
   5. Expanded inventory system (based on strength attribute)
      1. The inventory might have tabs to show attributes and skills
   6. Level up menus
   7. Climbing, swimming, flying. Animations, too.
   8. Survival system. Hunger, thirst, rest, optional.
4. Quests and Storylines:
   1. Need a whole ass system for this. There are tutorials.
5. NPCs of the world:
   1. Pathing system for terrain
   2. Expanded animations and system for up/down, walk, death
   3. Death system that leaves searchable corpse
   4. Integration with inventory system
      1. NPCs should pick things up and have them when dead
   5. Integration with attributes and skills systems
   6. Integration with quest system
   7. Integration with survival system
   8. Daily tasks and chores
   9. Profession/role system
   10. Advanced combat behaviors
   11. Mobs, lots of mobs

7. Main Game Feature Descriptions:

* Immersive writing:
  + Need a storyline setting that allows for ups and downs.
  + 3 act storytelling.
    - First act:  Introduce the world.  Everything positive, relatively easy.  Less resources available due to player not having friends/credentials.
    - Second act:  Introduce external conflict.
    - Third act: Point of no return. Hero’s journey.
* Interactable environment:
  + Similar to SS13, everything that is a sprite needs to be interactable in one way or another.   This should possibly include drag physics based on the strength of the player.
  + Gathering resources from the wilds should be relatively easy, with trees, rocks, etc. renewing in time with a day/night cycle.
  + The exception will likely be the ground.  There doesn't feel like a lot of reason to add digging, outside of possibly a Stardew Valley-style system of digging small holes for worms, seeds, etc.

* Open World map exploration:
  + Building the map will be a HUGE undertaking, as it will be large enough for players to wander and explore.
  + The map is a tropical island with a fairly sizable city prospering at the foot of a plutonic mountain. The mountain has been carved into and is used as a gargantuan fortress by the royal family, and overshadows the entire city.  Walls and farmlands surround the city, though beyond that lies dense tropical rainforest.
  + Possibly being limited by the boundaries of the island(s), the world will be an explorable, three-dimensional tilemap consisting of numerous levels; easily ten or more, however many it takes.
  + Similar to Elder Scrolls Games, however, indoor spaces and "special" areas will consist of their own levels.  These will be accessible through doorways, allowing for space-saving breaking of physics.
  + Swimming in bodies of water would be VERY cool, but a good system is needed.  This should include integration into the character's stats for being able to hold their breath, swim speed, etc.  This will be weird to do in 2D, but going underwater may create its own scene ala Mario swimming underwater.

* Influence of the passage of time:
  + Day/night cycle.
    - Everything in the game can be based around the day-night cycle clock.  This will help time most world events.
  + Seasons
    - After a certain amount of time passes, the seasons can change to bring about different challenges and different seasonal resources.
    - During winter, outdoor surfaces become icy, etc.  On the trees and plants, different fruits should come about at different times of the year.
    - This means creating multiples of MANY sprites for the environment, BUT the planned island is in the tropics, so it really only has "very sunny" and "storms and rain" as its weather patterns.

* Complex player character:
  + Combat and movement will be complicated affairs.  There will be a magic system that matches the martial weapons system, allowing for growth in both through gaining experience.
    - Movement should allow the player to navigate in relatively interesting ways.  This should include a system of jumping (again, may be weird in this system) that can be improved over time, until the player is capable of leaping from the rooftops.  Being able to climb up z-axis walls would be another skill-based system.
  + Hunger, thirst, and fatigue are all possible meters that the player may have to attend to in a survival fashion.  A goal for leveling up and becoming more powerful should be to overcome these issues as well as becoming faster, more acrobatic, stronger, etc.
  + The player (and all characters) will have overarching Attributes that affect every part of their capabilities.  These attributes will be:
    - Strength
    - Dexterity
    - Endurance
    - Intelligence
    - Wisdom
    - Charisma
    - Luck
  + The player will have a full skill system that will be fed by experience gained from interacting with the world.  The skills should comprehensively cover nearly every circumstance the player could encounter, letting them level up passively as they play. These will still be generalized down to approximately 15 – 25 skills.
    - This system can include capstone choices where the player receives special attributes for completing skill trees.
    - Skills will include things such as "woodworking" which could include cutting down the tree, making the planks, carving the wood, building a house, etc. as sources for experience.
  + The player character will need to be made up of numerous sprites all working in conjunction with one another.  Each of these sprites will represent a different portion of their body which can then be dressed individually.  Different articles of clothing can then be designated to specific body parts, allowing for individual gauntlets, pauldrons, boots, etc.
  + An inventory system that needs to allow the storage of a wide range of objects in accordance to the player's strength stat.  This may be best achieved through a system not unlike Neverwinter Nights or Diablo.

* Quests and Storylines:
  + Massively important to EVERYTHING as the game will be entirely based around uncovering and completing quests.  Needs to have a comprehensive quest system that includes ways for the player to easily recall and understand the quests and hand.
  + A not small part of the fun will be exploration, so quests will likely NOT be tracked, but instead direct players to destinations through instructions.
  + Quests will largely take place within the city limits, and so should be expected to that end.
  + Quest givers will be scattered around the city, but will include regular/repeatable quest givers such as the Orc Bread Shoppe, the Adventurer's Guild, and the Guild of Balance.

* NPCs of the world:
  + NPCs will be a significant part of the organization of the world.  Since this is in sprite form, they should be plentiful.  Having a system that can randomly produce townsfolk to populate the world may be a good idea, though once populated, keeping those same townsfolk would add immersion.
  + A goal will be to have NPCs not only interact with the player, but also with each other.  They will each have their own needs meters they will be need to take care of by moving about the city to attend to their various daily tasks.  These tasks can be set by their profession and their location of residence.
  + Developing NPCs will include creation of enemies.
    - Enemies will generally be the more dangerous creatures of the forest outside the walls.  Occasionally there may be pirates or other threats from the sea and air.
  + Building the NPC systems will likely happen alongside making the main character system, as the NPCs will be a simplified version of the player character.

8. Game World Lore Summary:

On the world that is a mirror of many worlds, known as Nont, there is an island with a nation founded by a pair of dragons and their cult of worshippers, one with coppery scales and one with emerald green. There, they took in refugees and immigrants while fending off more aggressive neighbors, expanding their borders as they protected their people. Eventually, their city-state of Morania reached international renown, making headlines and grabbing attention the world over for their exploits.

Now, with the founding dragons having long since left for new adventures elsewhere, the gates of Morania are fully open and welcoming. Airships make the journey to the Far South Isles frequently, and most are able to survive the journey with the most recent magitech designs from the city of Ner’daan. Immigration is booming, as is adventuring, as Morania needs the help of everyone to continue building its territory.

The entire island is approximately twenty-two miles wide, and around half that tall. Dense, green landscape of the jungles are broken up by enormous plutonic mountains, each crested with remote gardens of their own inaccessible to anyone who can’t fly or scale the sheer stone cliffs. The vast majority of the island is covered in thick, nearly impassable rainforest jungle filled with a vast array of deadly, often magical animals and monsters. The ecosystem is highly dangerous for most medium sized humanoids, though the thrills it provides has attracted big game hunters and survivalists.

Tourism is hugely important to Morania. Being in the Far South Seas, the island is considered to be highly inaccessible. Due to the vast size of Nont (three times the size of real world Earth), the journey to reach Morania, or to return from whence you came, can take upwards of six to eight months. This means tourists who arrive on the shores are either very dedicated to being there or simply making one stop of many on a years-long adventure.

A vital part of the Moranian economy is an indigenous fruit dubbed “Life Fruit” that was discovered by the founding dragons. Appearing like large, bulbous, glowing orange peapods, the fruit will utilize a form of healing magic on whatever eats it, an evolved trait to encourage seed propagation. This fruit was cultivated by the founders and turned into a cash crop, despite being very temperamental and difficult to farm. One of Morania’s most famous tourist attractions is liquors made from the Life Fruit, which can be consumed to excess and will never cause a hangover or disease.

Also on the island are the indigenous people, the Jolakku. Though their first encounter was incredibly awkward, the Jolakku were led by pragmatic leaders who formed strong alliances with the Moranian dragons. The two peoples united rather than fought, and the city of Morania and the Jolakku villages freely exchanged information and technology. Today, Jolakku architecture hangs in the towering trees above Morania as added layers to the city itself, and the Jolakku nation is fully recognized to the world outside.

The city of Morania itself is built from grey stone, largely shaped and provided by the local organization, the Stone Smiths. This group is a religious cult dedicated to the worship of the copper dragon king of the island, who uses his magical control over shaping stone to create tools for the Smiths to use. With these tools, they can carve stone like clay and move blocks the size of houses, and so have used their powers to turn Morania into a city of sculpted artwork integrated with the natural forest.