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Overview

This is the briefing document for Matt's Open Table, Wilderness Exploration Campaign, *The Wilds of Gothregel*. It is intended as reference for the players and contains information on how the game will be played, as well as world information that the characters should be aware of. Also, any custom material: spells, races, backgrounds, etc will appear here and in future versions of this document. (This is Version 1.0)

This will be a different D&D experience than any I have had before. Likely, it's going to be a different experience than you have had before. In *The Wilds of Gothregel*, there are no quests. There is no world ending event that the party needs to stop, there is no evil organization for the party to resist, nor is there a good organization to tell the party where to go and what to do. Instead, there is only the wilderness and you.

History

Ramund Starcounter, a wizard of moderate renown, was studying the spells that power Minor Dimensional Fabrication and Access spells, commonly used in the well remarked *Bag of Holding*. He was seeking to discover why the spell seemed to have a fixed ratio between the size of the bag and the size of the pocket dimension. In his various researches, he became proficient in casting the spells on many containers of various shapes and sizes, many not thought previously enchantable. This provided him a way to easily fund his inquiries, as he was the sole provider of what is colloquially known as the 'Crapton Crate', which allowed merchants in Blackwater Bay to expand the amount of cargo they were able to haul in a single voyage a thousand fold.

His most important discovery, however, began with a simple accident. One day, while investigating a pocket dimension he had created inside a room of his tower, he knocked over his lamp and extinguished the flame. A thing as minor as magical illumination is apprentice play, but before he rekindled his lamp or summoned light of his own, he noticed a faint glow coming from the lining of the dimensional pocket. This incidental discovery marked a pivot in his research.

The light from between the dimensions became his sole focus. He turned his studies towards identifying the source, incidentally creating the *Wand of Expansion* to simplify the creation of new, dimensional spaces where which he could chase his rainbow.

Sadly, during this period, his fervor in investigating such a minor phenomenon earned him only mockery and derision at the Spire of Sorcery in Blackwater Bay. They treated him as a laughing

stock. For a full decade, he was the butt of their jokes¹. And while it took time, eventually, he was vindicated. The same school that once held him in disdain now laudes his accomplishments, and even has their prestigious Ramund Starcounter Grant, which awards funds to diligent researchers who are able to produce measurable results, even though their subjects are viewed as folly.

For after ten years of painstaking research and investigation, Ramund had found the source of the light. He described it as “a Rend in the fabric of the here-now,” an opening in the medium between Dimensional pockets, a space previously thought to be either non-existent or just a vacuum. Such a fissure proved that, even though said space appeared to be nothing, that could not possibly be. With careful positioning, Ramund was able to create a dimension² around the Rend and investigated it with his own eyes.

With careful deliberation, he delicately pried open and examined what was inside. He described it as a bright corridor, extending infinitely to all sides, with the only thing visible a splotch of dark an imperceptible distance away. With an intent to satiate his curiosity, he once again pivoted his studies, designing and building a ship that could float in the void and travel to the distant point. Christening it *The Portable Whole*, he crewed his small vessel with stalwart sailors and studious sorcerers, all eager to push back the boundaries of ignorance.

The journey was peculiar. First, it seemed within that bright corridor, time passed oddly. Ramund notes in his Expedition Journal:

“Our journey through the hall of light effected each of us differently. I remarked to Spencer Marko as we breached the other side that it was odd that months of preparation resulted in a journey that lasted only an hour. He looked surprised and informed me that he was certain the trip had lasted for months. When I pointed out our untouched supplies, and his lack of sleep as he had stood watch with me for the duration. He remarked that he had assumed it was the nature of the corridor, to remove the need for sleep or nourishment, or any other function of nature. I resolved, upon our exit from the corridor, to survey the crew and determine if the effect was the same across their number, or an affection by either me or Marko.”

¹In fact, a graduates of the establishment still use the phrase “Ramund your own business” and admonishment to stay out of one’s own work and return to your own foolish endeavors. Linguistic surveys indicate the saying is still in use, although the student population seems to increasingly be ignorant of the origins of the saying and its connections to the vindicated Starcounter.

²If anyone before had thought to attempt such an action, they would have deemed it impossible, as it was a widely held belief that the nebulous plane that the Dimensional Pocket spells accessed was unique and infinite, with no way to dictate the positioning of the pockets. Using the light from the Rend as a navigational aid, Ramund not only proved that such positioning existed, but developed the mathemagics and ritual variations that allowed the caster to influence the position of the pocket on creation of the space. This groundbreaking discovery allowed Ramund to reach his Rend, but also enable the incredible crime spree of the infamous Black Pipers, whose extraordinary exploits challenged the concept of security for all previously secure hoards on the Material Plane.

It indeed was an effect for the whole crew of the *Whole*. Each reported that the journey felt like a different amount of time. Some even managed to document the passage of time, most notably Magus Martan Alisheel, who manage to write all three hundred and seventeen pages of his master's dissertation, indicating that, for him, at least, the journey took a distinct amount of time. An amount of time that was not mirrored in their return to our plane. From the position in this world, it took them only two months to make their journey and return.

And return they did, bearing the base spoils from a world untouched by hands, human or otherwise. The scholars had data, proving the discovery of a new world at the far end of the bright corridor. The sailors had a more pragmatic approach, bringing with them samples of furs, minerals, and wood, all of which were of an amazing quality, all of which were rare to our world, all of which became an instant fashion necessity for the nobles of the Prime world. The riches of Gothregel could enrich the pockets of any enterprising adventurer, willing to venture out into a strange new land.

Background

Your character has taken the daring step of travelling to the wild lands of Gothregel. For many, this involve leaving a life behind back on Prime³. The cost of passage through the Bright Corridor is prohibitive for anyone who doesn't want to begin a new life in the wilds, and even then, it leaves new arrivals with little more than the armor on their backs and the weapon at their side.

Not many established adventurers travel to the wilds. They've become too reliant on the support that they've developed after years of warring on Prime. Only the young, the unestablished make their way to the new world. There they find a world, ripe for exploration, with little competition for their services.

Translation: *You start in Gothregel as a 3rd level character, with just the starting equipment. Characters will not be able to travel to Prime. There are no other adventurers in Gothregel, other than the party, so there is almost no exploration done beyond the party's actions.*

Marko's Landing

As part of the original exploration expedition, the crew set up a camp right outside the Rend. Gradually, as more and more brave souls migrated to the wilds, the camp became a settlement,.

³ There probably will one day be an official name for the original world, but there has been much outcry over what it should be called. While the debate rages on, the travellers to Gothregel refer to it primarily as Prime, but, occasionally, wistfully as Home.

It has little more than an Inn and a small general store at the moment, it has much room to grow.

Translation: *As the game progresses, new businesses and services will open. Your actions will help in part determine what businesses prosper and expand, although there will be some chance, as well as some narrative directive. Don't worry too much about it, but know that while there isn't much to do in town right now, there will be more later.*

Ramund's Folly

The central building to Marko's Landing is the inn, jokingly named Ramund's Folly. It's proprietor, Gylon Mason, claims to have been the first to set foot in Gothregel. The inn is rough, formed of uncut lumber with a dirt floor. The main room has a fireplace and a pair of long, split wood tables with uncomfortable wooden benches. The 'kitchen' is a crude stone hearth off to one side, where Gylon brews a large pot of thick stew and serves it out in crude plates of wood. The back room is a large, rectangular room, with sixteen crude bunkbeds set on the dirt floor. There's little privacy at Ramund's, and it's advised you keep a close eye on your belongings.

Three Whipperwurms

The main general store in Marko's Landing is run by a halfling named Ferad Finell. The store got it names by the three skeletons that hung on the side of the building, as a warning to would be adventures of the dangers in this land. Ferad's store has limited inventory, but he can place orders with his cousin back in Prime and can get some speciality items after a month or two, for a price. He also acts as the postman, collecting letters to Home, and holding messages from the far side of the Rend.

Changes to the Rules

In order for a meaningful game of wilderness exploration to take place using Dungeons and Dragons as it's system, certain assumptions must be made clear and certain alterations to the rules must be presented. Some of these changes are small tweaks, enabling some parts of the rules to work. Others... are a bit more sweeping.

Food and Drink and Foraging

Any wilderness survival experience must keep solid track of the supplies people are carrying. Each person can carry 10 days of rations and 1 waterskin without including them in their encumbrance count. At the end of each day, each creature with the party will consume 1 days worth of rations and drain 1 skin worth of water. A successful Forage check will decrease the

number of creatures that need to consume by one. As long as there is at least one successful Forage check, the entire party is able to refill their water supply.

Hunger and Thirst

While food is important, a character can go without food for a number of days equal to 3 + their Constitution modifier (minimum 1). At the end of each day beyond that limit, a character suffers one level of exhaustion. Eating half a day's rations counts as going without for half a day for determining exhaustion due to hunger.

Water, on the other hand, is essential. If a creature doesn't have any water to drink, they will suffer a level of exhaustion at the end of the day. If they consume half a waterskin worth, at the end of the day they must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution Saving Throw or suffer a level of exhaustion.

Foraging

For the most part, most of the food you forage in the wild can only be used that night, in place of your preserved road rations. If the party is travelling at a slow pace, each character is presumed to be foraging.

Game Modifications

Various class abilities and spell may effect foraging. As they come up, we'll add modifications as needed to close any loopholes WotC throw in to make wilderness exploration in 5e simpler.

At the moment, nothing specific is worth a place on this list. Just be aware at an overpowered ability may be nerfed mid game.

Encumbrance

In order for adventuring out into the wilderness to have meaning, there needs to be a restriction on what you take with you. Therefore, encumbrance will be enforced. It will, however, be different from what's listed in the PHB.

A character can carry encumbrance points equal to their Proficiency Modifier plus their Strength Modifier. If they are trained in Athletics, they may carry an additional point.

All items are either Important or Inconsequential. Inconsequential items don't count towards encumbrance, unless you have a lot of them. Ammunition is beyond Inconsequential. If you

have a ranged weapon, I assume you always have the arrows, bolts, bullets, etc allowing you to use said weapon. Personal Rations are also counted separately.

The encumbrance value takes into account not only how heavy an object it, but also how awkward it is to hold or carry safely. Stowing objects away can cut their Encumbrance in half. However, it is not quick to pack items away, nor to retrieve them. It will take at least one Action in combat to retrieve it, although particularly full packs or complicated systems or items may increase the time it takes to retrieve.

It is important to note that wearing armour counts as stowing it away. Carrying a suit of plate mail uses 6 points of your encumbrance capacity. But actually wearing it reduces its toll on your capacity to just 3 points. A shield is carried, not worn, so it does not benefit from this reduction.

Mounts and piggyback rides

There are times when a character, instead of walking along themselves, is carried by another creature. If you're lucky, you've found something to use as a mount. If you're not lucky, it means you're unconscious or can't walk for some reason or another and some unlucky member of the party has to haul you over hill and dale.

There are two numbers to determine, to find how much encumbrance it takes to carry someone. First, the equipment the passenger is carrying. That amount is divided in half, rounded down. (Note: If a creature is, say, unconscious, they can't carry anything in their hands. So unless they have sheaths or holsters for their weapons or whatever, some items may have to be carried separately from the ally, and thus at the full encumbrance.

The other factor is the size difference. If you're attempting to carry a creature of the same size category as yourself, it takes two points of encumbrance. If you're attempting to carry a creature smaller than you by a single size category, a Medium sized Human Fighter carrying his Small sized Halfling Rogue, for example, is a single point of encumbrance. Carrying a creature two size categories smaller than you is Inconsequential. Carrying a creature one size category bigger than you, that halfling carrying the fighter to safety the next day, for example, is four points of encumbrance. The encumbrance value continues to double for each additional size category larger the creature is.

The math for mounts functions exactly the same way, although they occasionally have saddlebags and places to stow weapons.

Carts, and Beasts of Burden

As a general rule, a beast's encumbrance is their amount of hit die plus their strength modifier. A creature with the Beast of Burden attribute has twice that amount of encumbrance points. All

items they carry must be secured to the creature, as they obviously can't carry items themselves.

A cart, wagon, or similar can carry a lot more than any one creature. They can, however, only be used on flat, dry terrain. Roads are preferable, if uncommon in the wilderness. If such a conveyance is used, the vehicle can be loaded up to five times the draft creature's Encumbrance, including the weight of the vehicle in the Encumbrance. (Handily provided on the chart below)

Creature	Encumbrance Capacity	Vehicle	Encumbrance
Camel	5	Cart	4
Donkey/Mule	8	Sled	6
Elephant	14	Chariot	2
Horse, Draft	7	Wagon	8
Horse, Riding	5	Sleigh	10
Mastiff	2	Dog Sled	2
Pony	4		
Warhorse	7		

Vehicles

Some of the vehicles have special rules and conditions

Harnessing creatures

One of the important aspects of domesticating wild animals is we are then able to turn their raw power into a useful force. Horses, oxen, dogs, or even the fantastical beasts of the world are all capable to pull your loads. When harnessed to a vehicle, they travel at their normal land speed, unless encumbered, just as a player character (listed below). For some vehicles, multiple creatures can be harnessed. This allows them to add their Encumbrance Capacity to assist in hauling the load.

A vehicle with more than one type of creature harnessed moves at the speed of the slowest creature.

Some creatures are too vicious to act reliably as a beast of burden. The creatures on the chart above are usually reliable, but for other creatures of foreign and mystical origins, your DM may have more stipulations for

Cart

A cart is a wheeled vehicle, normally with only one set of wheels in the middle of the cart. Due to the way it is designed, you are only able to harness one creature to the cart. It is, however, small enough that up to 5 medium sized creatures can assist by pushing, pulling, etc on the cart. In doing so, they add their available Encumbrance Capacity to the effort of moving the cart.

Wagon

A Wagon is a larger version of a cart. It normally has four wheels, making it more sturdy. It is large enough that two creatures are able to be harnessed to pull it. More creatures may be connected to the wagon for additional pulling capacity. For each creature after the second, add 1 to the Encumbrance to account for additional tack, harness, etc.

Sled

A sled is a vehicle designed to travel on ice and snow, with runners instead of wheels. It ignores difficult terrain caused by winter weather, but treats any other terrain as difficult terrain. Only one beast can be harnessed to a sled.

Sleigh

A sleigh is a larger version of a sled. Two or more creatures can be harnessed to pull it.

Dogsled

A lightweight sled, designed to be pulled by a pack of dogs.

Travelling while Encumbered

If a single character is carrying more than their allotted amount, they, and therefore, the group, travel at a slow pace. Any encumbered character does not gain the benefits of travelling at a slow pace. In addition, at the end of the day, they must make a Constitution Saving throw versus $10 +$ their Encumbrance Point Total. If they fail, they take a level of exhaustion.

At maximum, a character can carry their strength modifier over their encumbrance value (minimum of 1 over)

Example: Igniea the Sorceress is 3rd level and has a Strength score of 9. This makes her proficiency bonus +2 and her Strength modifier -1. Her standard encumbrance value is 1, and she can carry at most an additional 1 point of gear. Stuart the Braggart, is a 3rd level fighter with

a strength score of 16. This gives him an encumbrance value of 6, +2 from his proficiency modifier, +3 from his strength modifier, and +1 from his proficiency in athletics. His maximum load is 9 points of encumbrance.

Below is a listing of the armor and weapons. Items with a 0 encumbrance are treated the same as Inconsequential items.

Weapon Encumbrance Chart						
Dagger	0		Mace	2	Shortbow	3
Dart	0		Quarterstaff	2	Lance	3
Sling	0		Spear	2	Greatclub	4
Blowgun	0		Battleaxe	2	Crossbow, light	4
Club	1		Flail	2	Longbow	4
Handaxe	1		Longsword	2	Glaive	5
Light Hammer	1		Morningstar	2	Greataxe	5
Sickle	1		Rapier	2	Greatsword	5
Scimitar	1		Trident	2	Halberd	5
Shortsword	1		War Pick	2	Maul	6
Crossbow, hand	1		Warhammer	2	Pike	6
Javelin	2		Whip	2	Crossbow, heavy	6
Net	2					

Armor Encumbrance Chart				
Studded leather	4		Shield	3
Hide	4		Scale mail	5
Chain shirt	5		Half plate	5
Breastplate	5		Ring mail	5
Padded Leather	3		Chain mail	6
Plate	6		Splint	6
Leather	4			

Resting

Travelling through the wilds, fighting all sorts of beasts, wears you down. And its hard to recover your stamina while out in the wilds.

On finishing a Long Rest, if a creature is suffering from one or more levels of exhaustion, they make a Constitution Check against DC 15, modified by the situations on the table below. If you succeed, you reduce your amount of exhaustion by 1.

Weapon Deterioration

Adventuring in the wilderness can be rough on your gear, your weapons included. While some amount of care can be taken to preserve your tools, in the heat of battle, sometimes your weapons can be damaged or even broken! Hopefully, you're carrying a spare or two to see you back to town to get your main weapon fixed.

Weapons can become broken in a variety of ways. Using a weapon in a way not intended, fighting a monster with acid attacks, or just getting really unlucky.

Ruining Strike

When you make an attack roll with a weapon and get a natural '1' on the die result, you may choose to reroll the attack roll. If you do, after your attack is resolved, you roll on the Weapon Deterioration Table and apply the received trait.

Broken

Your weapon is broken. It may even be in pieces. It need a professional to repair it, which will likely take time and money. Get used to your backup blade. You may be using it for a while.

Chipped

You blade has a notch taken out of it. It's still functional, but if it would become chipped again, it will become broken. It also has a -2 when rolling on the Weapon Deterioration Table.

Dull

Your blade has lost its edge. This weapon deals one less damage per weapon die. Bludgeoning weapons cannot get this trait.

Off-Balance

The weight of your weapon has shifted, slightly, making it awkward to wield. In combat, when you make an attack roll with this weapon, you subtract 1 from the result.

Fraying Bowstring

Your bow string is beginning to fray, making it hard to fire arrows with accuracy. In combat, when you make an attack roll with this weapon, you subtract 1 from the result.

Scratched

Mostly cosmetic, your weapon received a fairly superficial mark. It is, however, a harbinger of future issue with the weapon. When rolling on the Weapon Deterioration Table, you gain a cumulative -1 for your result. This trait can be received multiple times. During a long rest, you can maintain your weapon and reduce the number of scratches by 1.

Splintering Wood

The wood of your weapon is beginning to splinter. It's still functional, but if it splinters again, it will become broken. It also has a -2 when rolling on the Weapon Deterioration Table

Weapon Deterioration Table	
Result	
15+	No damage to the weapon.
10+	The weapon is scratched
5+	The weapon receives one negative trait. Dull/Frayed (odd), or Off Balance (even).
4-	The weapon receives the Chipped or Splintering Trait.

Rolling on the Weapon Deterioration Table is 1d20+ the material modifier. Weapons listed as "Simple" on the weapon table in the Player's Handbook have a toughness modifier of +1. Weapons listed as martial have a toughness modifier of +3.

Repairing weapons

Under normal conditions, weapons cannot be repaired in the field. To fix most damage, a trained weaponsmith will need to spend some time reforging, gluing, reshaping, buffing, and all kinds of other repairing verbs to fix your weapon.

Certain broken weapons can be repaired using the *mending* spell. Such a weapon repaired loses only the broken trait, retaining any other negative traits.

Notable NPCs

- ❑ **Ferad Finell**- Halfling, Proprietor of the 3 Whipperwurms, the main general store in Marko's Landing.
- ❑ **Gylon Mason**- Proprietor of Ramund's Folly, the main inn of Marko's Landing. Claims to be the first person to have set foot in Gothregel
- ❑ **Ramund Starcounter**- Discoverer of Gothregel. The Inn of Marko's Landing, *Ranmund's Folly*, is named after him.
- ❑ **Spencer Marko**- Captain of the *Portable Whole*. The settlement, Marko's Landing was named after him.

Getting your head in the Zone

This is a list of books, movies, etc. that I'm drawing on for inspiration. Maybe checking them out will let you know where I'm coming from.

1. The Long Earth, by Terry Pratchett and Stephen Baxter
2. Kong: Skull Island