About Me

Hi, I'm Emily! I'm a playtester for Spirit Island and took over running the custom content Discord for Spirit Island last year (https://discord.gg/f7QY5YTDdc).

I've had very solid experience with developing Spirits, having made a handful (and, gasp, one is done!), and also having made a project of rebalancing the game's Power Decks.
This guide will be written in a mix of casual and professional tone as I see fit. Hope it helps you.

If you publish your content online and want to have a chance of developers seeing it, you will need to agree to the FAQ disclaimer:
https://querki.net/u/darker/spirit-island-faq/#!Creating-your-own-game-elements

This guide is currently eager for feedback, especially to improve suggestions regarding theme for designers. Please @ me as @emilintle on the Spirit Island custom content Discord or give comments on this doc. Thanks!

Preface

Spirit Island is an incredibly popular game, but despite this, very few custom Spirits have really come up to even a decent standard of development - perhaps a handful rank highly.

Why is developing a custom Spirit so difficult?

1. Spirit Island, unlike quite a few other board games, wants its custom content to be developed with a very clear thematic concept instead of a mechanical concept[1]. This makes many custom designs fall flat.
2. Custom content designers want to make things that are a bit more complex. This tends to result in high to very high complexity designs being the starting point for a developer. These designs **are** too difficult for a new designer to complete.
3. Spirit Island development demands a large amount of testing - at least a hundred games, to give an idea, and many games as a long tail that goes on with minor tweaks throughout that time. Custom designers want to finish much quicker than this.
4. On top of this, any content development wants a variety of people to test it. Spirits have different approaches that are easy to miss when trying the same Spirit repeatedly

[1] More on this in step 0. You are very able to make a mechanics-first Spirit, but the design challenges are noted there.

yourself. Because Spirit Island is separate-play cooperative, other players cannot comment much on if your strategies were dominant in a different way.
5. Feedback is very hard to come by - when looking at a Spirit, random people call out balance first and theme last, when theme is the first thing that should be focused on and balance is the last thing to be completed.
6. New designers tend to get some basic design restrictions wrong and are less able to get feedback on these. Spirits starting with 13 total presence is one of the simple ones that's both easy to slip on and easy to fix.
7. Designers do not start out with clear goals in mind and get frustrated along the way.

Let us attempt to rectify this[2]. This guide will borrow concepts from Lord Motas' guide from a few years ago, and add onto it. This guide does not describe the only way to create a high quality spirit. But I do believe that it describes the *easiest* path to creating a high quality Spirit - my goal is to help you make a Spirit that will both satisfy you and be enjoyable for other people, but is **not** to make a guide that's a quick read[3]. I will interject personal opinion throughout that may dissuade you. **Please, make your designs that violate these guidelines.** Either you'll come to agree with them (yay!) or I'll get my mind changed on custom design (also yay!)
I will continually encourage you to stick to concepts no more complex than Breath of Darkness Down Your Spine or Downpour Drenches the World. Hopefully, this guide justifies that logic.

How do I make a Spirit?

Designing and Developing[4] a Spirit can be reduced down to a deceptively short list.

1. Your hook. What's your central thematic or mechanical idea?
2. Formation of theme and mechanics - use your starting hook to develop the others. A thematic spirit of isolation likely has a good amount of fear and special Isolate mechanics, for example
3. A concept for your lore.
4. Your Special Rules, your playstyle and your Elements
5. Your tracks, growths, and innates.
6. Your unique power cards.
7. (optional) Ask others for feedback on the design; be prepared to scrap parts.
8. Start a test - load up a single spirit game against an adversary and take notes, then begin revision.
9. Complete your spirit in the rough order - structure, cohesion, and **balance**. Note how far down balanced is!

---

[2] Eric Reuss, who spent a large amount of his life developing content for Spirit Island, moved towards designing for Nature Incarnate as development was too difficult for one person . Emily, emulating his work, realized development is so difficult that no one was able to do it. Now it is your turn to study Spirit Island development. source

[3] Allow me excuses for lacking brevity, thx.

[4] Design and Development? Nature Incarnate split creation into two parts - Eric designed Spirits, coming up with the initial palette of rules, innates, and uniques, while a development team continued the designs to completion, occasionally checking base to make sure everything fell within theme.

10. Source artwork.
11. Completion.

Table of Contents

0. Goals
1. The Hook
2. Theme and Mechanics
3. Lore Concept
4. Special Rules, Playstyle and Elements
5. Tracks, Growths, and Innates
6. Unique Powers
7. Feedback- How to give, how to receive, and how to process.
8. Your First Test and Revising
9. The Long Tail of Cohesiveness

Step 0: Goals and Theme I

Step 0 is critical - as you start developing your Spirit, you want a shape of your goals.
What this means is: what parts of the design are so critical that you would find the design unfun if they had to be changed in testing?

This is usually centered around mechanics. “My spirit must have a minigame around its sacred sites being Dahan!” will inevitably run into problems with presence fragility and assumptions of the Spirit’s power in the mid to late game. This inevitably runs into a problem:
The best Spirits are designed theme first.
If you create mechanics first, then go back and make theme, it is likely that the mechanics you have will only partially express that theme. This disjoint is very difficult to get rid of; it is better to have a loose conception of the mechanic you want to make, pick a theme that fits, then shape the mechanic around that theme. Try not to get too invested in a specific version of a mechanic. Your first iteration will likely not work.

During development, your first iteration should be the most bare bones version of the Spirit possible. If you have a complex idea, think of a less complex spin on it and put that in - your goal is to keep everything thematically cohesive but mechanically simple. Trimming complexity is **incredibly important** for getting outside perspectives; the higher the complexity, the more players will need multiple plays to grasp the Spirit’s basic strategies, and the harder it is for you to iterate on.[5]

[5] High complexity has more levers to tweak than low complexity. What can you even tweak with Fathomless Mud of the Swamp? There’s no ogres in the design, so maybe that.

Being aware of our goals will give you a better perspective on addressing problems. ‘Instead of looking at it as a nebulous, "how do I increase how much quality my spirit has", it becomes, "In what ways is this misaligned with my goals, and how can I change it while minimizing the impact on my other goals?’[6]

This also helps process feedback. Maybe the design is something someone else won’t enjoy at all, but if it satisfies your requirements that’s all that’s required. Your Spirit might overlap with another’s concept a lot, have some key mechanic that aggravates players, or have a theme that irks a tester. Defining your goals quickly lets you contextualize these and understand how to revise.

Sample goals:

1. I want this to be a support spirit!
2. I want this spirit to have a fun minigame around its sacred sites.
3. I want this Spirit to add Dahan nearly every turn and turn Invaders into Dahan there’s lots of Dahan and the island is a happy paradise with sunshine and rainbows.[7] [Not this one, please].
4. I want my player to feel like they are a creature of darkness and terror.
5. I want Emily to approve of my design because she knows best.[8]

A Brief Note on Theme

Why is theme so central to a design? A note from another custom designer:

‘Unlike in most board games, Spirit Island's core engine has a TON of design space. This is a blessing as much as it is a curse; so much design space means that it's a super inspiring game to let your imagination run wild (and probably a huge component of why the custom scene is as active as it is!), but also, having so much design space means that it's nearly impossible to figure out what it is you *should* be doing in that space without something to give clear direction. Making a compelling minigame and stapling it on top of a very fundamental character is enough for a lot of board games.

However, in Spirit Island, due to how many different angles every aspect of the design can be taken, it's *impossible* to make those decisions coherently without some guiding force. If your only real starting point is a minigame, and you want to build a spirit around that, when you get to the choice of how the spirit should juggle its cards, what its relationship to certain pieces

---

[6] This quote’s from Lemur. Thanks, Lemur. This section wouldn’t be here without you.

[7] It is a running gag in Spirit Island custom development that the most common custom Spirit is one that adds Dahan. It’s seen all the time. There’s a reason it’s not a core mechanic. More on that later.

[8] Flattery will get you many places. As a secondary note, if you post your design on the custom content Spirit Island server, your theme looks decent, you seem open to feedback and are focused on the right parts, you can get responses from the game’s developers. They’ll probably tell you quickly to immediately refocus your design and shave it down to only a few small parts. They will basically always be correct in this regard. Be prepared - if you ask for any feedback, you will get harsh feedback. More on this later.

should be, its relationship to majors etc etc, those decisions being made arbitrarily will result in a weaker and less focused design.'[9]

Step 1: The Hook

Definitions

Hook

A clear and concise way to describe your Spirit. A hook can be thematic or mechanical. Canon Spirits tend to come from thematic hooks, while custom Spirits tend to come from mechanical hooks - either can be used.

Hook (Thematic)

"If I play this Spirit, I feel like x". Clear examples are River Surges In Sunlight (a surging River), Wildfire, Behemoth (Godzilla), Ocean (tidal growths), and Trickster (a chaotic Trickster).

Hook (Mechanical)

"My play style is centered around this core mechanical idea." Clear examples are Hearth-Vigil (protects Dahan) and Breath of Darkness (targets lone Invaders).[10]

Spirit

A natural or mythological concept given form

Making a hook is your very first step - don't get too deep into things before this! Spirits can deviate from this hook during development, but usually to their detriment- Towering Roots of the Jungle, meant to feel like an immense guardian tree, ended up having mechanical compromises that left its theme a bit muddled.

Hooks should be concise. The more words you require to describe the concept, the more the Spirit tends to deviate from "Spirit" and become more of a "being".

Thematic Hook tips:

1. Descriptions of relationships with Invaders should generally be left out of a thematic hook - the Invaders are recent arrivals, and Spirits that grew in power to face the Invaders would still have been of decent size and purpose pre-Invaders.
2. Your thematic hook can be a few different concepts or an evolution of one. Wandering Voice is a voice of a spirit of death that was left with only its mouth and thus can do nothing but scream. This can be an interesting direction to take your Spirit in, but you want to keep it concise.

Mechanical Hook tips:

---

[9] Lemur

[10] Note that both of these are very loose mechanical hooks to be flexibly changed in development, and can easily be argued as thematic hooks.

1. Mechanical hooks should start from a singular idea. Keeping to a singular concept is very important for complexity; throwing in any additional mechanical hooks will make the Spirit difficult to develop. Your Spirit should not do every cool complex idea you have for it. Stick to one primary complex concept.
2. Your hook shouldn't be "What if I took the game's systems and used them entirely differently?". This will be awful to develop. Dancing up Earthquakes allows you to play cards normally -or- Impend them, but the concept wanted to make both Impending a lot and not a lot viable and ended up far too strong.
3. Following from that, higher complexity designs have a larger gap between minimum and maximum performance. Creating a very high complexity design will make it much more challenging to receive feedback.

Other notes:

1. Spirit Island is tropical, and possesses only a wet and dry season, with snow only at the highest mountain peaks and no true "summer". Spirits of cold are not at all widespread on the island, so creating one requires you to explain the incongruency.
2. Spirit Island is an intentional mix of Polynesian, Caribbean, and other coastal native cultures. Borrowing from Western cultures for concepts will be disjoint with the rest of the mythology, so try not to borrow as strict 1:1 - a mythological concept can generally be reduced to a single idea - Behemoth? Smash.
3. You want to decide on the intent of your design here. Are you trying to execute on your theme over anything else? Do you want to make something unique, or do you mind if it overlaps? What mechanics or parts of mechanics do you consider must-keeps? (Ideally, none).

Step 2: Theme II and Mechanics

Once you have a hook, the combined concept can be hashed out. Here, the theme informs the mechanics, which informs the theme, and so on, until you have an outline of the Spirit itself.

What happens in this step?

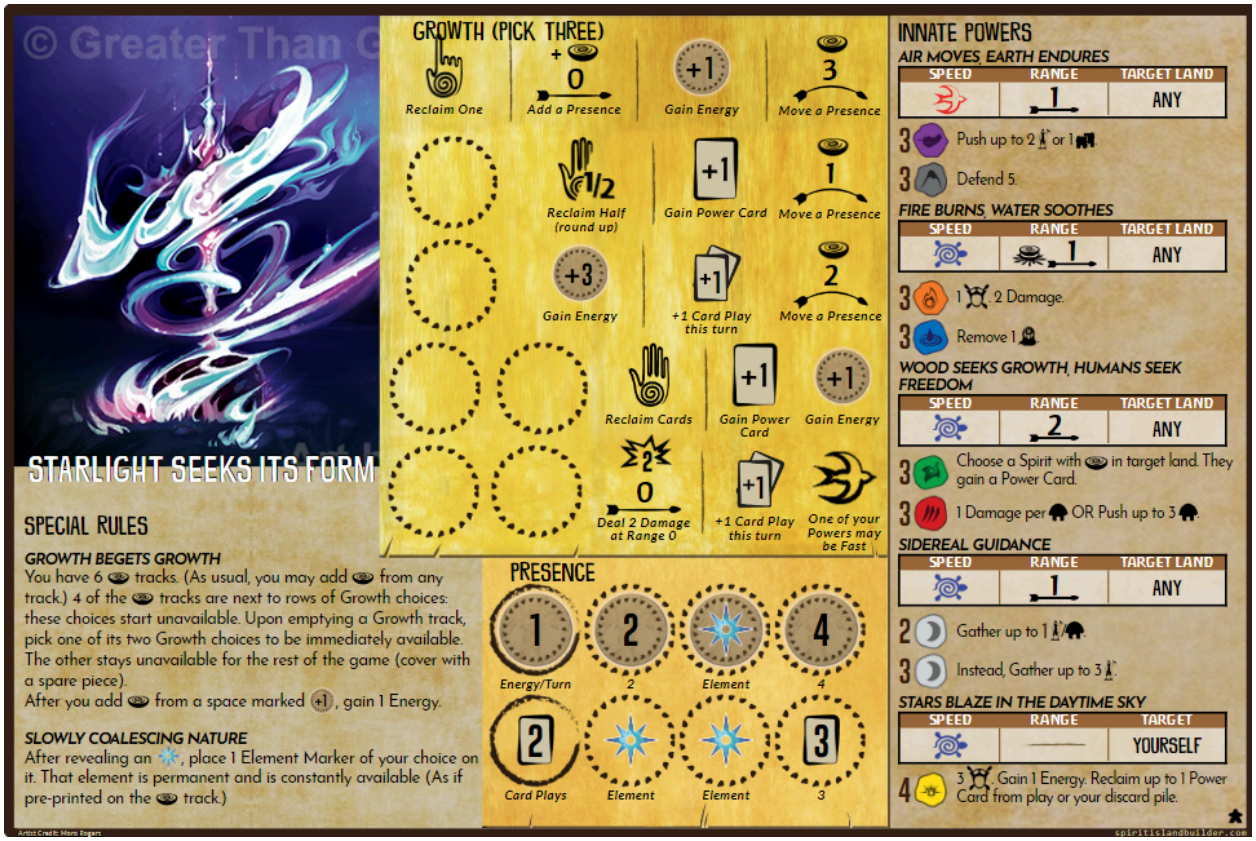
1. The Special Rule(s) are being conceived here.
2. Your relationship with the Dahan and Invaders are being fleshed out. Relationships with Dahan should never be openly hostile[11]; damage or destruction of Dahan should always be collateral. As Shroud of Silent Mist notes, humans and Spirits are different beings that do not truly 'become' each other. Spirits should also be thought of as fundamentally alien creatures - if they exhibit emotions, they tend to be one or two emotions felt strongly, as these are the feelings the design is trying to evoke when playing it.
3. You're starting to develop a sketch of Uniques, Innates, Tracks, and Growths, but not fully developing them yet.

[11] If they were, the Dahan wouldn't give you Energy from Dahan Events, would be disinclined to act when you ask for Dahan Powers, etc. The game has a basic assumption of Spirits being those that sided with the Dahan in the Second Reckoning, which redefined the relationship between Dahan and Spirits away from worship, sacrifice and subservience to a more equal footing.

4. You have a rough idea of the name, but not quite set in stone here. Names also describe the relationship with the Dahan - LordMotas' guide goes into more detail here, but a short name is one of familiarity and closeness, while a longer name is a more distant relationship. Vengeance, for example, is Vengeance as a Burning Plague that Scours All Those Who Remain Before It, which if written fully would cover up Vengeance's Spirit art.
5. You have a sketch of a lore and a play style. Lore can be written how you like; play style description will be covered.

A Note On Complexity

This guide states, repeatedly, that you should not make a VHC design. I'd like to touch on why. There are 4 Very High Complexity Spirits. Let's cover Starlight Seeks Its Form.



Starlight's complexity is very presentational - the board is entirely different than anything that came before, and it has 5 innates with 9 total tiers.
It has two Special Rules:
-One explains how its tracks work, in detail.
-One explains how its star nodes work.
There are no other special rules.
It unlocks growth options, all of which are very basic: Gain Card, Extra Play. Its bottom tracks are more standard: more Energy, more elements.

Starlight is beloved. It's also grossly overpowered. Because the Spirit has no game plan, the Spirit's core game loop is "find the best cards that match the Elements I want and flog them". It also spent ages trying to balance the innate tiers between each other and failed. It wanted to balance the growth options between each other - and was somewhat, if not fully, successful.

Key ideas:

1. Higher complexity designs have more levers to pull for development.
2. Balance will take ages. With Starlight, the player has so many options that you'll have to handle a large amount of combinations in testing.
3. Very High Complexity Spirits want a minimum level of power such that you can learn the spirit and not have a miserable time. This power tends to result in the spirit being far too strong in the hands of skilled players. It will be very difficult to make a design that satisfies these two design goals; a design that is complex enough to challenge a very skilled player is probably too complex for you to acquire any outside testing for it.
4. An example custom design that's pretty far along is ***Song Weaver***.



Song Weaver also has 4 uniques and 8 different Chorus Cards, which are left out for brevity.

Song Weaver has required hundreds of iterations to get into a decent state, and is still being constantly iterated on. (Perfectionism and Very High Complexity don't meld together great).

Its rules are fairly simple - Element Markers attach to Dahan, and gaining Cards aligns

Dahan with you. The tracks and starting innates are both aligned with its game plan - steadily build up to gain new Innates, and a small action to alter the board early.
Like Starlight, it suffers from a game plan being Top Deck Good Stuff, but unlike Starlight it's only able to be in a few elements at a time.
It is possible to make a Very High Complexity design - but, I would very much encourage the following before doing so:

1. Set a starting deadline for development on it. Work on it for that time, then set it aside and work on something less complex. Doing these in tandem will allow you to learn design lessons and continuously apply them back to the VHC Spirit, while taking breaks from its design will let you continually approach the Spirit from fresh eyes and not get locked into it.
2. Set very, very clear goals before working on it, but do not make them rigid. ***Song Weaver*** has used Element Markers on Dahan since the start, but they've always been fiddly. Most of the people looking in believe they're worth the fiddliness, but they could be wrong.
3. Be flexible in scrapping large parts of the spirit and trying entirely new directions - you can always go back! Very High Complexity spirits demand larger scale reworks than lower complexity spirits, which will mean sacrificing many of your starting ideas. Earthquakes did not start with Quake Tokens. Wounded Waters Bleeding went through at least 3 major reworks. Behemoth went through really only one rework of significance.

Step 3: The Lore and Name

Once you feel you have a rough idea of a central mechanic and a central theme, you want to finish writing your Lore out. You'll very likely come back to this later, so spend only as much time here as you're ready for. Starting with the Lore will help define your mechanical space better.

In addition, you want a working name - how would the Dahan describe this Spirit, translated to English?

What to keep in mind:

1. What is the story here? How does this Spirit exist on the island, what is it visible as / its usual avatar, and so on.
2. What emotions are you trying to evoke in the player? How does the Spirit embody these?
3. How does the Spirit usually interact with the Dahan?
4. Does the Spirit have a particular relationship with the Invaders?
5. What's your Spirit's name? Dahan-friendly spirits tend to have shorter names, while one that is either unfriendly or alien has a longer name.

Step 4: Rules, Playstyle & Elements

From the previous steps, you should have a decent idea of the shape of your Special Rule and what Elements you focus on.

The Special Rule:
The first real mechanical step in design is the Special Rule, which you want to develop here. Spirits are defined by these rules: “Heart of the Wildfire deals damage when it places Presence. Earth Defends the lands where it has a Sacred Site. Thunderspeaker and Sharp Fangs Behind the Leaves can move with their respective Dahan and Beasts.”[12]

You can come back to revising this later, but you very, very much want to come up with this first as it underpins the rest of the design. Spend time on it - it becomes difficult to revise the farther into development you are; despite this, don’t shy away from changing it. Most box Spirits[13] changed theirs throughout development while circling around the same theme.
Special Rules want to be worth anywhere from -1 to 3 Energy and be important to critical for how the Spirit plays.

…Let’s actually describe what “Energy” means.

Spirits have a budget. This is - roughly - 10 energy worth of benefit on the first turn between initial card plays, innates, and presence tracks. **This is a starting point - you want to get these in the right ballpark, then iterate on them much later.**

Values of various components:
-An Energy is worth about an Energy. …You probably could have guessed this.
-A card play is worth about 2.5 energy to start, and can[14] become more valuable later on.
-A card gain is worth about 3 energy. This is actually lower than its “true” value, but is intentionally costed a little cheaper to encourage players to gain new cards.
-Reclaim One is worth about 3 energy.
-Elements are worth about an Energy, ideally. The stronger your innates, the more these are worth.
-Growth can be worth any number of Energy as a result - if you have a Special Rule giving 5 energy, your Growths should probably be terrible!

---

[12] If I use quotes, I’m quoting LordMotas’ guide.
[13] That’s the term I’ll use from now on.
[14] Ideally, they do not. In practice, Spirits tend to have imbalanced innates where the early levels aren’t good and the later levels are as good as thresholded Majors. Let’s try and avoid that, shall we?

-Example action value: Destroy 1 Explorer- is worth about 2.5 energy. Take Animated Wrackroot - a fear is worth about an Energy, destroying an Explorer is 2.5, and the range 0 requirement fuzzies this to about 3 Energy. A more detailed guide will be given later, but putting requirements or constraints on your special rules **can** bring down costs, but these costs **must** actually be costs and not simply stepping stones.
-More detail of values will be given later in Step 5, and these values will be repeated there. This is to just give you an idea.

Special Rules can only cover so much text space before players stop even wanting to try the Spirit. If you have a lot of ideas for what Rules to use… cut some. You can develop these ideas in another Spirit. Theme must occasionally be sacrificed at the complexity altar, so don't stress about this.

If your Special Rule immediately places your Spirit close to Very High Complexity, set it aside. You can come back to it later - develop something simpler first.
If you are following this guide, you aren't ready to make a Very High Complexity Spirit. If you choose not to follow this warning, you're in for a challenge. I have never seen a Very High Complexity custom Spirit design even approach being finished.
Moving on -

<u>The Playstyle:</u>
The playstyle is the chance to sell your Spirit on what it does, along with a blurb on how to work around its restrictions or benefits.
Let's look at Volcano Looming High:

> Benefits more than most Spirits from getting onto the board; in addition to the usual benefits, it can fuel an Explosive Eruption. This can result in a huge turn, but if overdone the following turn or two may be very constrained.
>
> Bigger eruptions are extremely powerful, but cause , and the Invaders may not provide the luxury of enough time to build up the desired pressure - judging the timing of when to erupt and for how much is a key part of playing this Spirit.

This description is overly focused on a single aspect of the design - Eruptions. Your play style should cover the bases of your Spirit.

> **PLAY STYLE**
>
> Incredibly good at protecting everything at its - and can draw Invaders towards there - but is constrained in when and where it can move its . Has some ability to Remove Invaders (driving them from the island), but starts off vastly better at guarding the land than at smashing things.

Roots' covers it well - this hints at wanting to gain new Powers to stop stalling and start wanting to affect the board.

<u>Elements</u>

You probably have an idea of what elements your Spirit is! To help, here's an idea of what the elements connect to thematically:
Sun: Day, light, heat, dominance, command, constancy
Moon: Night, cycles, darkness, dreams, transformation
Fire: Heat, anger, destruction, desire, violent change
Air: Wind, sky, sound, distance, speed, trickery, thought
Water: River, fluidity, fertility, empathy, healing, disease
Earth: the land, strength, constancy, stasis, resilience
Plant: verdancy, growth, entwining, regeneration
Animal: Beasts, humans, blood, the body, life, death

Spirits can be any number of Elements, but I would **very much recommend** no more than 4. Past a certain point, you lose guidelines for players to gain cards with and instead reduce their guideline to "gain the best powers, all the time."

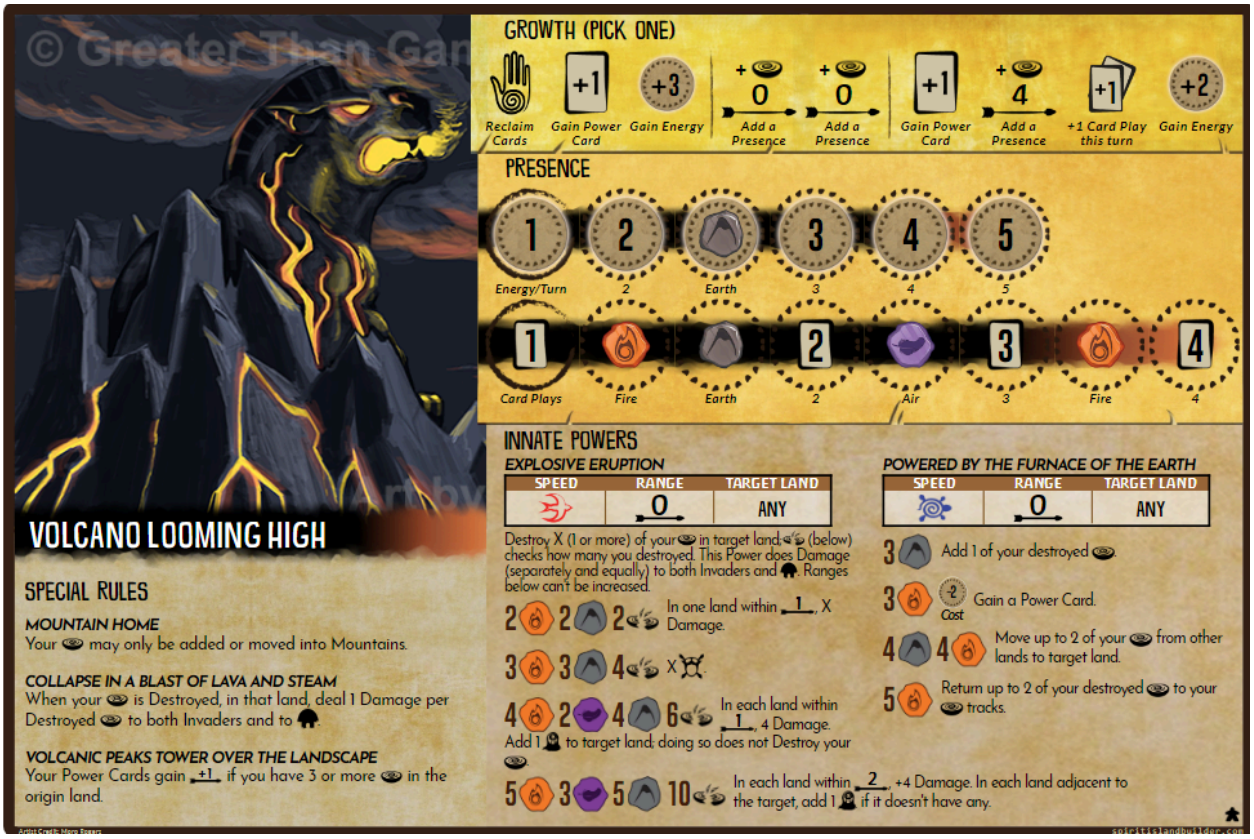
Your Spirit should either be one primary element with secondary elements, or two primary and one secondary, with the fourth being a tertiary.
Examples - Mud and Breath are primary Water and Moon. Hearth-Vigil splits between primary Animal and primary Sun (although, in practice, is primary Sun).

Step 5: Tracks, Growths, and Innates

All three of these steps are very intertwined. This will be split into three sections, but some concepts travel between them. Growths will inherently (but unfortunately) focus on balance for the first bit.

A Glimpse of the Volcano:

To start, let's look at an example. Here's Volcano's board:



First off, the Special Rule gives inherent value to presence addition - presence is worth a bit less than a Damage each, although destroying it is painful. This makes each presence addition worth about 2 Energy more.[15]

Additional range and Mountain Home both cancel out to be a very slight net negative - call it about -0.5 Energy.

So, 1.5 Energy of budget spent on rules, but it actually can fuzz out to -0.5 Energy, with the Presence addition budget being spent on when the Presence is added.

Volcano immediately spends this budget on its growths. A brief touch on that:

Growths Part 1: Budget

Ted wrote a starting place for the values of various Growth actions. Let's go over these, along with an idea of their actual value[16]:

[15] Note that, many times, you'll have to make guesses at this value and adjust it as time goes on. No big deal - just follow the costing guide from later on.

[16] This, like many other components of spirit design, is me giving my best guess at the right values after experience. Feel free to send me your thoughts on what I got wrong here - I am not infallible!

1 Energy - 1.
Hilariously, this isn't actually correct - an Energy in growth is probably worth about 1.1-1.2 Energy… sometimes. We'll try to make this work out to 1 in practice.

A specific Element - 1.
Again, this is more like 1.1-1.2, and we'll try to make it work out to 1. This is because Spirits have been designed with innates that are too strong later and too weak earlier.

Any Element - ~~1.3.~~ 1.5

This is actually worth about 1.5. A choice between specific elements - 3 secondary - is about 1.3. Major Thresholds are good! <u>Additional note: Try to avoid Any elements. Spirits are defined by their Elements; Any muddles theme.</u>
Card Gain - 3.
Card Gain is worth more than this, but for game development purposes this cost is correct. Gaining Cards should be a critical component of the kit.
Card Play - 2.5
Worth more like 3. We'll try to make it worth 2.5 if used, but this again ties to later innates being too good.
Reclaim All - ~~3.5~~ 4.5
This is worth 4.5. Reclaim All was massively undervalued in the maingame and is worth more than adding presence, especially later. Why this is the case is because, eventually, you will develop a set of Cards that is worth more playing again over growing, especially once you hit innate and Major thresholds. Hopefully, we can bring this more down to 4, but we'll treat it as 4.5. An example of where this is the case is Sharp Fangs - its -1 cost, Reclaim, Gain Card is theoretically worth 5.5 compared to 4 card gain, 4.2 presence, and 3 energy. Despite this, the +3 Energy is still taken, and higher level Sharp Fangs play wants you to Reclaim with just 2 cards played on turn 2 because of how high getting your innate again is. This is likely why the bottom track ended up with so many Reclaim Ones - Reclaim All is a bit worse when you can already get back your best cards!
Presence Range 0: ~~3.5~~ 3.8
Presence Range 1: 4
Presence Range 2: 4.2
Presence Range 3: 4.5
Presence at range 0 is about 3.8. It's very kit dependent, however. The rest are about right.

Growth Part 2: Design Tips

What lessons should you take for design?

1. Reclaim loops happen when a Spirit either acquires a set of undercosted cards that are better to loop than continue growing, or has a loop that gives it more medium term

advantages over growing. You want your Spirit to have a compelling and unique gameplay for the first 3 turns, and a rich tactical decision space for the first 6.

2. Certain actions cause problems when frequent:
    a. One isolate might prevent an explore, but two isolates can easily stop 3.
    b. Frequent downgrades with a bit of luck can very quickly cut off the inland.
    c. Common access to Defend 3 can beat adversaries; easy access to Defend 5 is enough to make a Spirit quickly become too powerful. (See Intensify vs base Memory in RedRevenge's tier listing).
    d. Ravage Skips are dangerous. Ravage Skips are worth 1.5-2 blight heal, whatever adversary effects you are preventing from happening, and stopping dahan from dying. If you can avoid them in your kit, do so. Build Skips can be just as thematic.
    e. Dahan addition. This will be repeated later, but <u>your Spirit should never add more than 3 Dahan/game.</u> <u>This includes replacing Invaders with Dahan</u>. Does Fractured Days Split the Sky do so? Yes! Is it the most powerful Spirit in Spirit Island? Also yes! Too frequent Dahan addition breaks the mechanical parts of the game and also theme. Dahan are human; about 25% died during the waves of diseases the Invaders brought[17], and overpopulation of them on the island would similarly add Blight every turn if addition was very frequent[18]. Effects that make the Invaders more 'harmonious' with the island can easily be represented by Downgrade or Removal.
3. **Try to use NI or JE Spirits as guidelines for tracks and growths, and use JE spirits as guidelines for innates. NI Spirits have generally good balance in growth and tracks with a good mix of elements, but allowed for access of higher tier innates too easily which leads to the midgame becoming much too easy.** (Speaking of RedRevenge's tier list, your target power is about C. If you're decent at design but not necessarily at gameplay, it'll probably end up at B, which is the target. Shooting for slightly underpowered but thematic is always the right call; power is far easier to add than remove).
4. A weaker early game cannot truly compensate for a stronger late game.

Growth Part 3: Models

Here are a few models you could use for your Spirit. These dive a bit into balance concepts to try and get your Spirit started in the right place.

Spirits that place presence 111 each turn:

Model 1:

- Reclaim, Presence 0/1

[17] As opposed to the far higher rates historically - the Spirits helped the Dahan through this time quite a bit. There's no particular source here, but Hearth-Vigil prevents 25% of the Dahan from dying to give an idea.

[18] Ted notes that 10 or more Dahan on the island would add a Blight every turn. This is where the 3 comes from. Over the course of the game is measured up to about turn 7; later having more addition is fine.

- Presence 1/0, Card, *+1 Energy or smaller benefit*
- Presence 2/3, +3 Energy, small additional benefit of less than an element/energy, depending on kit. *Feel free to trade, say, +3 Energy for 2 Energy and a choice of two elements.*
- Your tracks should be pretty bad to compensate for the high values of g2 and g3. This model makes your Spirit want another way to gain Power Cards, but that's not the worst thing to be hungry for when g2 and g3 are given additional benefit.

Model 2:

- Reclaim, Presence 0/1
- Presence 3, Card Gain, Benefit of ~2 Energy value
- Presence 1/0, Card Gain, Benefit of ~2.2 Energy value
- This is what Roots tries to use. This gives the Spirit a lot of access to card gain, but the two growths are fairly hard to balance and players will be able to sniff out which one is better. If either gives Energy, it should be the Range 0 one.

Spirits that place 011 presence each turn:

- Reclaim, Gain Card, benefit of ~0.5 Energy
- Presence 1, Card Gain,
- Presence 3, +3.5 Energy value max (just do +3 if unsure).
- Tracks should be good all around, with only one dead spot (if starting at 2 plays, make it the spot right after 2 plays - players won't mind so much). This model tries to push g3 a little harder because it tends to be a pretty miserable growth.

Spirits that place 021 presence each turn:

- Reclaim, Gain Card.
- Presence 2/3, Presence 0/1 (mix and match)
- Presence 2, Gain Card, 2 Energy, or other immediate benefits of ~5 Energy
- Tracks should try to be pretty interesting later, especially on top track. Players will be very inclined to Reclaim loop once set up, so better late tracks can help. Ideally, you can make the Reclaim even worse than this and compensate by making the other 2 growths stronger.
- This model wants a secondary way to gain Cards to make top track better; without it, the model favors card plays too much to reclaim a core set of cards as it cannot recover from forgetting cards and costs too much tempo to gain Majors.
    - Some wacky thing that starts with all its presence on the board and loses them, or has Finder like tracks, or no bottom track etc. - <u>put this back on the shelf and come back later</u>. But, really, there's no model - you will have to develop this all on your own. That's part of what makes this so challenging - you do not have an existing knowledge base to work from.

<u>What makes you want to use each model?</u>

The answer is **theme.**

- Spirits of steady, unrelenting growth are ones that favor 111 models - these generally align with Sun, Earth spirits.

- Spirits of erratic or surging growth favor 021 models - generally, Water, Air, Plant.
- Spirits that need to recollect themselves favor 011 models - usually, Fire, Moon, or Animal.

Depending on your Element portfolio and your theme, you may be inclined towards a specific profile. Decide which one fits and pick a model you think works the best.

Tracks

Tracks are slightly harder to make a guide for, because they delve very deeply into the balancing side and don't tether as well to theme. One of the key parts of designing them is coming up with interesting breakpoints and tactical decisions - at each space on the track, the player should have a legitimate short and long term choice to take the growth options or track placements.

As a general note, **try to be generous on top track and stingy on bottom track.**

Let's pull out an example:

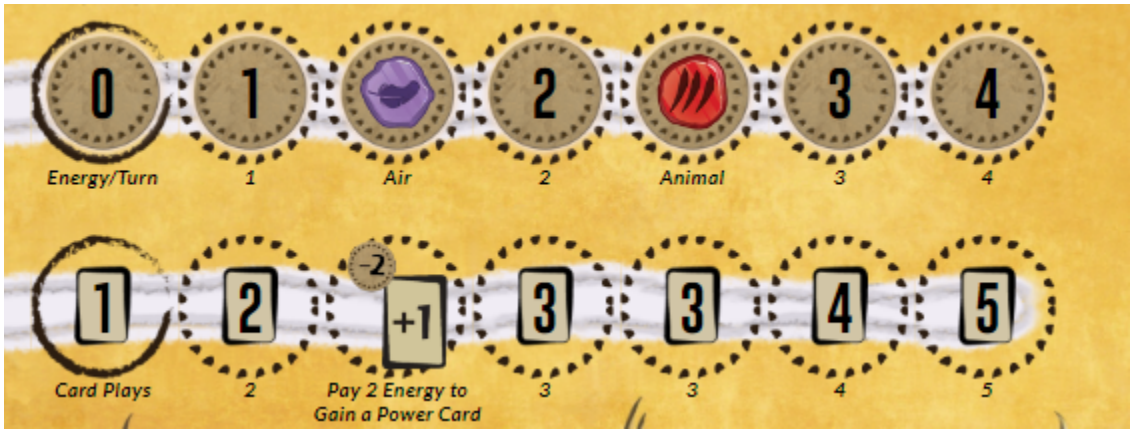


…Okay, an example with choice.



…No, not that one either.

Example: Many Minds Move As One

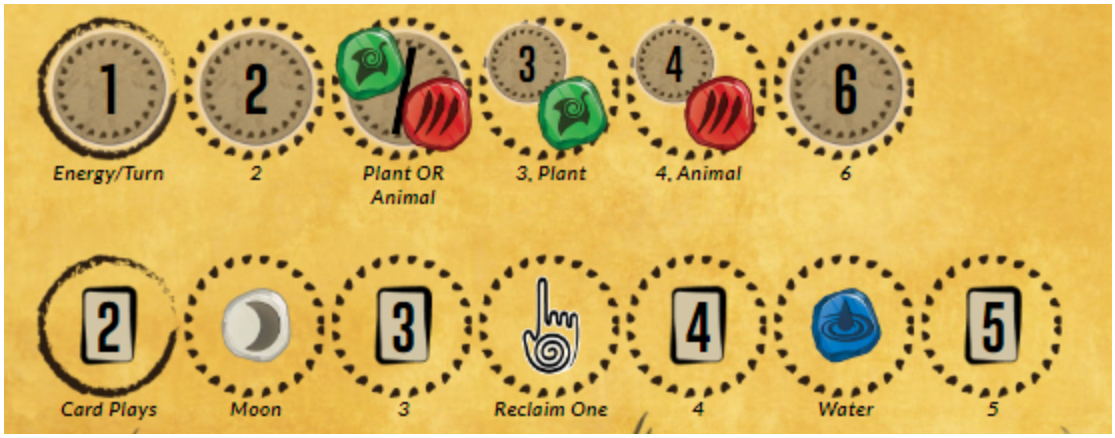


Aha!
Many Minds has a lot of interesting decision space going on its tracks.
(Note: Its hand is too cheap by 1-2 Energy, and it gives overall a bit too much fear, but that's not too bad).

At nearly every space, Many Minds' player gets interesting decisions:
-Do I want to place 1 presence and get an Energy, or do I want to place 2 presence? It mostly wants to place 2, but the third growth gives a lot of good tactical value that relieves stress off the rest of the kit in bad times.
-Do I really want the elements on top and more Energy so I can fund Majors?
-I normally wouldn't care for Energy with how cheap my hand is, but if I can get more, I can also buy more Cards which is great Growth value. How much do I do so, and do I push top more?
-If I want to afford Majors, I'll need to stockpile Energy hard. What cards do I gain to give me the most versatility on Major gains later?
-I want to Reclaim as little as possible early as my cards are cheap but mostly give advantages when paired with another action. How can I try to get strong enough to start reclaim looping?[19]

[19] Note that Many Minds' bottom builds that go for 3 plays quickly - g2 top bottom, g2 bottom bottom, tend to end up stuck in a Reclaim Loop for a few turns. This is just one option, but it's something to watch out for in design.

Example: Mushroom's Refuge[20]

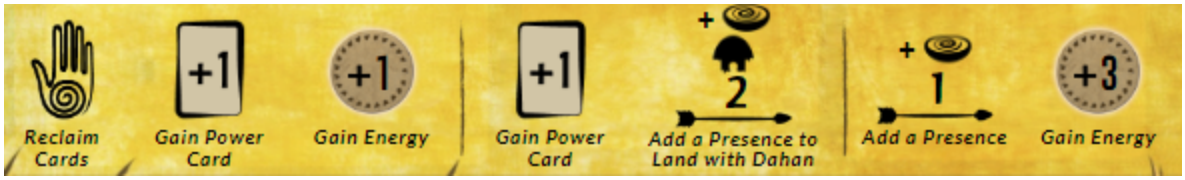




Let's go over a custom Spirit of mine, Mushroom's Refuge. It's a Spirit with some thematic flaws, but I'm fairly happy with it.
This also conveniently highlights the benefit of long tail testing.

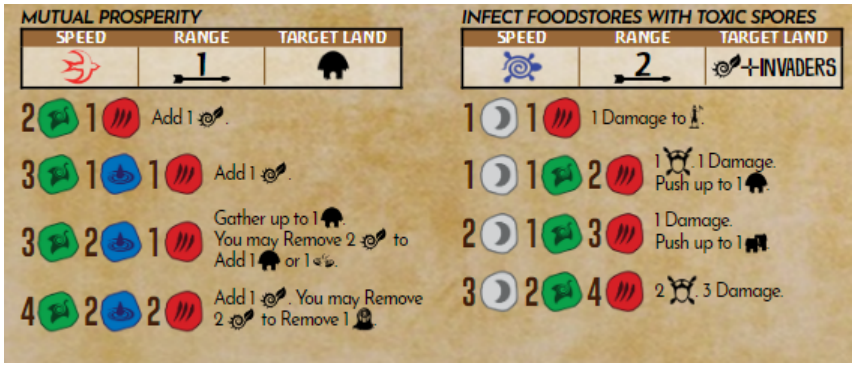
For a long time, I used the first image for my presence tracks, and recently swapped it to the second. This came about from other people testing it and abusing the Reclaim One and a fairly standard growth option 3:

[20] This Spirit is one that's almost done with development at the time of writing this guide. It has clear thematic weaknesses and wasn't made using this guide to start, resulting in issues that compounded later. But it presents a pretty fun core gameplay if you accept the caveat that it's only kind of a Mushroom spirit and is more of a Dahan spirit, which was my intention in development but is never the assumption of a person picking it up.



Being able to stockpile energy then loop a cheap Major was very, very floggable with this Spirit, as I gave a good amount of secondary elements on both innates and tracks to make Majors more interesting. Reclaim One can be dangerous, but this highlights something: **even if you believe something is balanced, other people are far better at finding imbalanced parts of your kit than you are.**

The Spirit is designed to have fairly balanced track decisions overall. The tracks give a nice amount of elements, but the innates are fairly element hungry for not much benefit - for reference:



At each point on the track, while designing the nodes after, I questioned - what benefit could I put here that would incline me to take either top or bottom track at any point? What later benefits would entice me to go down that track in the first place?

Note that this Spirit is still in active development - as it turns out, after making this guide, I reduced Reclaim All's Energy gain by 2 and tweaked a lot around.

Track Design Notes:

1. Your tracks can be a good way to express theme: try to think of fun, thematic things your Spirit can be doing while making your tracks. Does your Spirit interact frequently with the Dahan? This could be represented as a Dahan movement node on tracks. Do they add Strife very frequently? A node could cover this. The top Energy track tends to be action poor, so you have space to put some fun ideas there that can augment your theme.
2. Elements on tracks should be frequent[21] and designed with breakpoints in mind. At what turn should "top", "mixed", and "bottom" strategies hit your innates? How easy should it be to hit the basic levels if you stick with your unique cards vs draft new ones? If top

[21] This is a personal opinion of mine - Mushroom's Refuge has a lot of splash elements to encourage Majors, as previously noted. Having less is fine; absolutely don't have more than what I designed.

overperforms, early level is likely too strong, while if bottom overperforms, late is likely too strong.

3. Try not to include Any elements on your tracks, but especially early - they take away from your Spirit's elemental identity and make Majors too simple.
4. Tracks will change frequently depending on your innates and uniques. Don't stress about getting them perfect - **you won't.** Mushroom's Refuge is on version 30 and has received probably 120-150 tests.
5. 5 plays is usually too good, but can be okay if your innates don't give you any benefit for 5 plays or if you have a particularly bad Reclaim. 4 plays usually lets you execute a core game plan and also play an undercosted support card.
6. Reclaim One Spots can be useful in some circumstances, but should primarily be used for theme. You generally do not want to place Reclaim One spots on top track - Spirits will loop the exact same strong Major for 4 turns in a row. (Spirits that Reclaim and place Presence are less problematic to get a Reclaim One spot on top). On bottom track, they can ease the likelihood of Reclaim loops, but end up being used to reclaim the best card - Unique Power balance needs to be tighter if this is used, especially on 0 cost uniques.

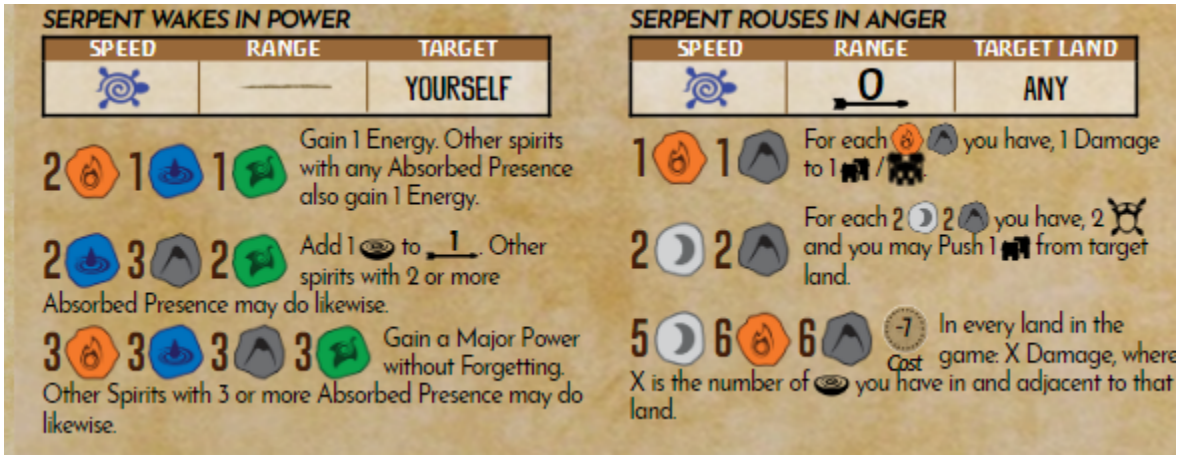
Innate Powers

The core idea to consider with innates is - what ideas are the most central to theme? Innates are usually chosen as two components of the kit that either flow into each other…



Here, Invaders are Gathered, then cast out.

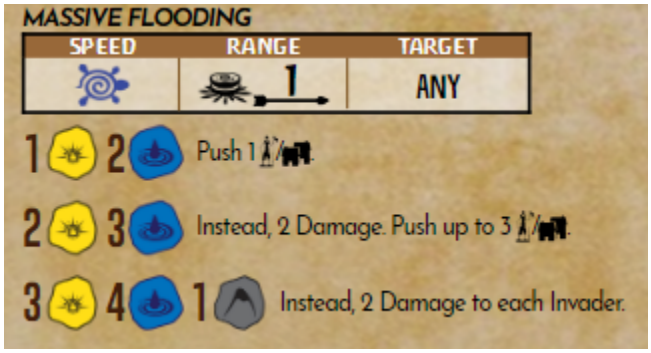
Or highlight two primary sections of theme



Serpent is steadily wakening, so is able to give benefits to other Spirits from the Island's spiritual essence. The right innate encourages Spirit to play spirit supporting cards while still being able to affect the board.

When making your innates, think about the following questions and concepts:

1. What two parts of the kit do I want to have happen every turn?
2. How can I make players consistently feel what I am trying to make them feel? Roots feels like it is a judgmental sanctuary, willing to shelter but not freely. Breath of Darkness stalks the land and people are steadily lost in the Endless Dark from downgrades. Your innates are one of the three primary ways you express theme throughout the game (the other being Special Rules and Uniques).
3. Mechanically, at what turns do I want players to hit the innates? How can I make all of my Spirits' options interact with the innates and not fall flat?
4. How can I set up my innate so that later levels don't overshadow the earlier ones?



Rivers' Massive Flooding improves significantly from level 1 to 2, making 2 card play strategies or off-Element Majors less viable. Level 3 capitalizes off of the control from Level 2, so is able to be maintained for longer if need be, but level 3 deals with many Adversary problems and is thus usually rushed for.

5. What ideas could work for the Innates but aren't quite as integral to the playstyle? (These are your uniques!)

6. What elements do you want to use for the innates? Pick the types from theme, and the levels from mechanics.
7. Try to avoid innates that add too many tokens, add Dahan, etc. Repeated, these effects tend to swarm the board in tokens that are either very low value or way too high in value.
8. Please, please, **please, avoid doing any of the following in your first drafts:**
    a. An innate that targets multiple lands that is any more complex than the right innate of Finder of Path Unseen.
    b. Scaling off elements in any way more complex than Wildfire.

    You can do any of these ideas, but leave them out of the first drafts. They're painful to develop and balance, and are fairly easy to add in when the rest of the kit is developed.

Notes on Range

1. You should decide early on whether your Spirit has either a primarily range 0 gameplay or primarily a Sacred Site gameplay. It can be neither, but I would encourage you to avoid both especially on innates - players will feel frustrated with their presence placement and have a difficult time growing to other boards.
2. Spirits always need a way to place presence onto another board across an Archipelago - this is mostly at range 2, but for some Spirits like Lure requires range 4 (1 to get coastal, 2 to reach across an Ocean, and 1 to get to an inland land). Keep this in mind when designing your Growths.
3. Spirits with very constrained growth ranges tend to be stuck not being able to interact with other players. If you want very localized gameplay, an Incarna Spirit is what you're probably looking for.

Step 6: Unique Power Cards

This section will cover power card design and touch on a separate project.

Unique Power Cards can be any combination of three things:

1. Have all of the elements you want for your innates
2. Have a great cost that you want to make your game plan work without spending all of your Energy.
3. Have a very useful effect that complements your gameplan.

You want a Unique Power to have… about 1.5 of these 3.
Unique Powers are worth a different value compared to Minor Powers - because the elements on them are aligned with your Spirit and useful, they want to be weaker or not aligned with your game plan.Otherwise, you're encouraged to loop any Unique Powers that fulfill too many of the 3 until you win.

Some examples:



Thematic Notes:
Flash Floods is a great way to represent a sudden surge of a River hitting Invaders.
Wash Away covers a broad swath of a river and complements this theme.
River's Bounty showcases the way that Rivers flow into the land and bring bounty to the soil.
Boon of Vigor is a surge of energy for another Spirit - a fun, thematic effect.

Mechanical Notes:
Flash Floods is a mostly good example - effect that's always useful, high cost, perfect elements. If going back, I would add Earth onto this card and perhaps a fear.
Boon of Vigor is far too good, perfect element, and has an extra element. The card should, at most, give out 2 Energy.
River's Bounty is also too good. Add 1 Dahan, Gain 1 Energy, pull Dahan away from destruction. Gaining an Energy encourages bottom track play, as looping this card lets you play more power cards.
Wash Away is a fantastic effect, with elements you want, at a decent price.

Because of all of this (and, well, track and growth design), it is usually better to go Plays more than Energy, and Aspects struggle to fix this.





One day, I'll learn formatting.

Thematic Notes:
A Dreadful Tide highlights a discomfort with widespread vermin and pests, preventing the Invaders from focusing on economic exploitation.
Boon of Swarming Bedevilment lends another Spirits' presence a feeling of swarming - a fun, thematic effect.
Ever-Multiplying Swarm has the Spirit feel like, with a bit of effort, a horde of beasts is just around the corner.
Guide the Way is a solid Dahan interaction card - the Dahan are familiar with the Spirit and are willing to follow its long migrations.
Pursue rounds out the theme by having flocks of rats, birds, and wasps (oh my!) harass the Invaders.

Mechanical Notes;
Dreadful Tide is a 0 cost skip that generates 2 fear. Note that 2 fear for a 0 is plenty good for a 0 cost with 4 elements. Don't do a 0 cost skip.
Boon of Swarming Bedevilment is a more flexible Encompassing Ward for cheaper. This likely also could have been a 1 cost.
Ever Multiplying Swarm is fair. It costs the spirit precious Energy but is mandatory to play early to kickstart its gameplan. Its elements are okay, its cost is high for the Spirit, buts its effect is great. 1.5/3 - yay!
Guide the Way has great elements, a great effect, is 0, and combos well with the kit. Unsurprisingly, you will very rarely see Many Minds forget this card.
Pursue is an effect that custom designs love to do sometimes - scaling anything. ***These aren't something you have to avoid, but they can be tricky.***
Uniques can have a broad range of intent of design.
Let's circle back to a custom Spirit of mine:



These effects all follow that rubric. There are issues with this - players feel frustrated when using these uniques because they feel underpowered. They are!
Let's go over each of them.

Thematic Notes:
Soporific Morels represents a more passive way to interact with the Invaders by gently coaxing them.
Mushrooms Burst is a burst of violence to some - to Mushroom, this is it showing how wonderful it is to be covered in Mushrooms.
Gift of Flourishing spreads spores far with other spirits carrying them to distant lands.
Call to Disperse ties into the spore dispersal theme, aiming to have Dahan spread new growths across the island.

Mechanical Notes:
Soporific Morels is a fairly weak defend[22] *at a moderate cost with fantastic elements for the spirit.*
Mushrooms Burst has mostly great elements, a universally useful effect, but at a high cost.
Gift of Flourishing has good elements, is very cheap, but has a finicky effect.
Call to Disperse has great elements, a useful effect that doesn't do much on its own, and a great cost.

This is the way that I try to design my Unique Powers, but can leave them feeling like Shadows' uniques in terms of being half-actions. You want to think about which of these criteria your uniques fulfill when creating them - if you don't enjoy that feeling, you can make your uniques a bit stronger and try to compensate for that budget elsewhere.

[22] Note I'm considering this using Proper Defend Costing, not with what Spirit Island currently uses. We'll go over that.

Basic Notes on Powers

1. If you want a Unique Power to be a bit stronger, don't make it a 0 cost. This encourages reclaim looping it too much.
2. Unique Powers that are too good encourage bottom track play and/or reclaim looping. Unique Powers that are too weak encourage top track play and forgetting them for Majors.
3. Unique Powers being too good also encourages players to not care much about gaining cards - they have the kit they want already, why not stick with it?
4. You have several Basic Designs for a card: Control (push explorers/towns)[23], Defend/Strife, Damage, Downgrade, Fear, Action Skip, Token addition, and Support. You can lean harder into one aspect to give your Spirit a strong desire to gain new cards, or give the player a variety of weaker parts of these to make them able to gain new cards and slot them easily into the game plan. Either works fine.
5. Starting with cards that are a bit frustrating and hard to use is a key component to keeping games fresh and varied between plays. River, to pull on that, does not feel fresh and exciting, but can be interesting in how to leverage its actions.
6. Spirits **should always have a form of Dahan interaction for theme.** Spirits each have a unique relationship with the Dahan, and the only way to express this is through your mechanical kit. What the form is is Spirit dependent, and can be as small as Behemoth's innate and Ravage skips pushing Dahan.
7. Avoid having both fast Dahan movement and easy Defend - too simple of a combo.
8. **Your uniques are a way to have fun - try to go for interesting designs with them that make players excited.** Many custom Spirits play it safe with their Unique Powers, which can be a little dull.

How do I pick the thematic effects for my kit?

You have (usually) 6 Powers to express your Spirit's theme - 4 Uniques, 2 Innates.
Things to think about:

1. What does your Spirit do when it's present in low, moderate, and large amounts? These could cover a broad array of card designs in the 0-1, 1-2, and 1-3 cost categories.
2. How often does your Spirit interact with Dahan? Frequency would lend towards cheaper cards having Dahan interaction.
3. How would your Spirit help other Spirits? Does it prefer to really only interact with the land directly, or is there a thematic boon you could include?
4. Spirits tend to have 4 Unique Powers. If either of these is true, consider having additional unique powers, if they are not, try to stick to 4.
   Spirits have more when (as of now):

[23] Unless you're Finder of Paths Unseen, you should not be moving Cities at base. Cities are very cohesive units of population that don't want to move. Towns tend to be more migratory villages and herds.

    a. the effects they want are present on very few Minor Powers (Many Minds, Finder)
    b. Their gameplan involves their Powers being set aside or Forgotten (Earthquakes)
5. Noted later - when in doubt, you could have a power that moves explorers/towns/dahan, a power that supports, a power that damages, and a power that shores up your theme or reinforces your innates.

Power Costing

Powers have a rough budget - the developers use an algorithmic formula to craft powers and then start to tweak them from there. These values are easy to get wrong - and were wrong for most of the game's development. Players want Uniques to be 2-2.5 of the 3 categories, as then they feel like they're shaking up the board. These players should be ignored, but their feedback can make designing your Uniques frustrating as players[24] like to feel comfortable in their game.

1. Power Cards are inherently costed with their elements in mind - the more elements a Minor or Major Power has, the worse its effect is. Unique Powers use a slightly different formula - the elements are always aligned, so they want to be a bit weaker.
2. Power Cards have range factored in, but you don't want to make your Spirits' kit too dependent on

So, how do you figure out the right costing of Uniques? Using the base game as a benchmark for your custom designs will result in the same power skew.
A side project of mine decided to take the Major and Minor Power decks and rebalance them - these were done to my personal preferences, so take them with a grain of salt.
We'll go over examples. Notes:

1. **All bolded statements on the correct costing assume, roughly, range 1 targeting. More difficult targeting or countereffects allow for stronger effects, and more generous targeting should have a weaker effect. Range 0 and Sacred Site 1 are worth about the same value.**
2. **Bolded statements also assume you have good Elements for your Spirits' kit (⅔ of the ones you want) - worse Elements mean higher Defends are possible, and better means the Defend should be worse.**
3. **Mixing and matching these two parts is critical to design. Your innate's tiers should be structured around your Unique Powers' Elements and not the other way around.**
4. **Fast Powers cost roughly 1 more than Slow Powers. Except for Defend and Skip, costing assumes Slow Powers.**

[24] Some, anyways! More on this in Step 7.

5. **0 cost Minor Powers with 3 Elements should have about 2.4-2.5 Energy worth of benefit. 1 cost Minor Powers about 3.5.**
6. **Be encouraged to mix and match effects depending on theme!**









Defend/Strife

Defend is the biggest one. The base game gets the cost of Defend entirely wrong, as do my edits.
Think of Defend as the following: “In a land matching a Ravage Card, Remove 1 Blight. 2 Damage per Dahan (count max 2)”. This is easily a 3 cost Major Power, but finds itself

comfortably in the Minor Power deck as 1 and 0 cost cards. Spirits love Defend effects - they prevent loss, and most Spirits have Dahan control in their kit. This means that even these effects which I handily nerfed are still too good.
Players are frustrated when their Defends don't work against Adversaries and want them to be buffed. Ignore them - they should find other, non-Defend tools to work against these.
0 cost Defends should have Defend 2 with generous targeting.
1 cost Defends should have Defend 4, but ideally more like 1 fear, Defend 3.
0 cost Strife should add 1 strife with an upside of around 1 fear.
1 cost Strife should add 1 strife with a good upside, or 2 strife with a downside.
2 cost Defend should have Defend 5 with a small upside.
2 cost Strife should have Add 2 Strife with a small upside.

Control

Control is mostly costed correctly, so I'll decline to put images here.
Many, many spirits have a "Wash Away"[25] - some version of a card (or, occasionally, innate) that moves towns and/or explorers. Push control wants to move to the same land; Gather control is usually better than Push, but it's context dependent.
From Nature Incarnate:
Breath of Darkness Down Your Spine has 1.
Wounded Waters Bleeding has 2 and an innate.
Dances Up Earthquakes has 2.
Ember-Eyed Behemoth has 1.
Towering Roots has an innate.
Wandering Voice Keens Delirium has 2 and an innate.
Hearth-Vigil has 1.
Relentless Gaze of the Sun has 1.

It's a very common effect to see. Control encourages Major Powers, which is usually a good thing. Need a fourth unique that works alright? Include a control effect in your kit and fit it to theme.

0 cost control should be a push 1 town/explorer with a small additional upside, or Gather 1 explorer/town.
1 cost control should be roughly 1 fear, push 2 explorer/town, or Gather 1 explorer/town with a decent upside. Whirlwind's control is an example of how to make higher control possible at a lower cost.
2 cost control is roughly 2 fear, push 2 explorers/town with a small upside, or Gather 2 explorer/town with a small downside.[26]

[25] As noted earlier, Wash Away is too good. Don't use it as a model.
[26] Yes, this means Beckons Softly is way too good. This shouldn't surprise anyone.

Damage





Note that the left Pull Beneath is a little too good, but well, when you make the cards you can do what you want. Remember that when designing your cards!

Damage is one of the more notoriously overcosted parts of Spirit Island. Damage thematically wants to pair with Fear[27], which makes Damage effects pretty bad when used compared to anything else.

0 cost damage should be roughly 1 fear, 1 damage at range 0 with a very slight upside.



(say, an OR option that has an equal benefit. This is a minor, which is a little better).

[27] Don't just try to avoid this. If you're doing anything more than 2 damage, you should be generating a fear for theme.

1 cost damage should be roughly 1 fear, 2 damage with slight upside.
2 cost damage should be roughly 2 fear, 2 damage with slight upside.

Dahan Movement





Dahan movement is fairly cheap and an effect that only really matters when paired with Adversary Effects or Defend. Incidental Dahan movement is much more useful to a Spirit, but is a jump in power.
Which effect works better is dependent on your theme.
Both of these cards are good models for Dahan movement costing.
Having too generous Dahan movement and easy access to Defend will make gameplay stale, so be careful.
I would very much recommend having Dahan movement be incidental as the slight upside to another card - think Terrifying Chase on Sharp Fangs.

Fear



Fear is a simple splash effect, but is a fairly expensive one - fear is worth about an Energy of value.
A 0 cost fear card should give around 2 fear. If fast, earning the fear should be trickier but around the same cost.
A 1 cost fear card should not exist, but theoretically gives 3 fear.
A 2 cost fear card… 4 fear? Why are you doing this? Please don't.

Fear on its own is a very odd effect - it scales very differently depending on player count, as with a variety of spirits fear is earned at a much more even tempo.

Action Skip, Blight Heal, and Tokens

<u>Action Skips</u>



Ravage Skip is generally not something I will recommend in a base kit. With experience, Ravage Skip tends to very much encourage Reclaim Loops to stabilize a bad situation.
Build Skips are much easier to use and can match the same theme.
Explore Skips (Isolate) are cheap and fun. Use them and have a good time!
A 1 cost Ravage Skip should be significantly challenging to pull off with downside.
A 2 cost Ravage Skip should have bad elements but be okay otherwise. (Heat's is slightly too good, but is washed out from other issues).
A 3 cost Ravage Skip should have generous upside.
A 0 cost Build Skip should be tricky to use - generally, range 0.

A 1 cost Build Skip should have nice upside.



A 2 cost Build Skip can have significant upside.
A 0 cost Isolate should have some upside (a bit less than a fear).
A 1 cost Isolate should always be a rider on another effect.

<u>Blight Heal</u>
Blight Heal is a dangerous part of the Spirit to have easy access to - it encourages disengaging from the main Ravage-Build-Explore cycle. It should **never** be 0 Energy as a unique design. Spirits like Starlight end up being able to easily win with this - Starlight can Remove 1 Blight, Defend 5 every turn if built as Water/Earth, which trivializes most adversaries.

A 1 cost Blight Removal should have significant downside.
A 2 cost Blight Removal should have slight upside.
A 3 cost Blight Removal should usually be part of another action.
Fast Blight Removal is worth a normal amount more than Slow.

<u>Tokens</u>
Tokens are a bit more complicated in costing.
The biggest note with tokens is - **don't generate too many.** You want to be careful with these.

Disease



Note that this is slightly too good, but again, when you make the cards you can do what you want. Remember that this guide is here to help you and I am simply another person.

Disease should generally always cost 1 or more. The base game assumes it should be 1 cost and equal upside and downside; I treat it as 1 cost with upside.
A 1 cost Disease card should add Disease with a slight upside; in reality, give it a decent upside with a thematic restriction. Example: Wounded Waters' disease addition should likely have a Fear on it, but would be a bit too good with that.
A 2 cost Disease card should be generous in its benefits - 2 fear, Add 1 Disease is a decent model.

Beasts

Beasts scale very hard - they give random effects which can be leveraged primarily by players knowing the odds of the Event Deck.
Be careful with beast addition - add no more than 1/turn.
A 0 cost Beast Addition adds 1 beast with equal upside and downside.
A 1 cost Beast Addition adds 2 beasts with slight downside.
Beast Addition has a very small cost difference between fast and slow.

Wilds

Wilds are fairly adversary dependent and can frustrate players that want a more consistent gameplay. They're easy to include, and can represent any number of things, but generally represent static hazards that the Invaders can report ways around - think a particularly troublesome cliffside or poisonous plant life.
A 0 cost Wilds Addition should add 1 Wilds with decent upside.
A 1 cost Wilds Addition should add 1 Wilds as a rider on another action; a Wilds is worth roughly 1.5 Energy.

Badlands



Two Solid Badlands cards

Badlands are odd. The developers of the game believe Badlands is too good in the example card above, and they would be **entirely** correct. Nonetheless, I will give you advice to use these as a model for Badlands cards. Why? Because Badlands are fun and a long term setup thing, and the game is about having fun.

A 0 cost Badlands card should have a slight downside, as otherwise the player is encouraged to reclaim loop it too much.
A 1 cost Badlands card should have decent upside.

Your Spirit should never, ever, add 1 Badlands/turn. Even if you're a Badlands spirit, your target is about 0.5 Badlands/turn at base. Players can draft into adding more.

Support

Support is… somewhat complicated. You can use the Growth costing guide to figure out the costing of effects.
The note on Energy being worth more than an Energy primarily applies to Power Cards.
Support Cards **get a premium to encourage their use, and generally get a bonus for using them on other Spirits.** This premium is worth around 0.5 Energy; the base game assumes it at 1, which resulted in nearly all Support effects being far too strong.





Changes: Gift of Power is 3 cost of effect with 4 Elements. I gave it a downside of only targeting another Spirit, which brings it roughly in line.
Gift of Living Energy gives out 2 Energy for about 2.4 Energy; with the downside, it's about 2.2 Energy of value for what should be 3 Energy. This card is my current iteration of it, but is too weak, but another Energy would be too much for my tastes. It's a struggle!

Targeting Another Spirit should give around 0.5-1 Energy of value; ideally, 1 Energy of value with the remainder eaten from the self targeting ability.

The hardest part of support effect design is a lack of good models - nearly every support card[28] before Nature Incarnate is too good. The ones from NI and from Horizons are usually good models.

[28] I was corrected on this - Renewing Boon and Reaching Grasp are nothing to write home about. Of course, if you're using those as your models, you probably already know this problem and I am awed at your judgment.



Resilient Power is a well costed support effect - good elements for you, slight upside on top, and higher cost, with a mild restriction if you target yourself.

Terrains and OR effects

Generally, your uniques and innates should not have terrain restrictions - your gameplay tends to be too swingy. Terrain restrictions to a pair reduce the cost by a bit less than 1 fear.

OR effects - the base game assumes OR effects give you one okay option and one bad option. I prefer my OR effects to be two decent options; your uniques should generally try to

avoid using them as they make the Spirit more complex. Flexibility can be done in other ways,



Like Plaguebearers, which can move various different types of pieces, scales, and **is one of the most complex parts of Vengeance's kit**[29] despite having a simple effect. Be careful with these, but they can also provide your spirit with a more rich mechanical experience.

Step 7: Feedback Guide[30]

Hello! Lemurkin here (with Emily editing), with a guide on how to actually process Feedback - and, hopefully, give feedback. (this is obviously my sloppy first draft. my writing process is to make something bad on purpose as fast as possible and rewrite it to be more concise and informative)

So, let's break this into some components.

- Understanding feedback
- Asking for feedback
- Listening to feedback
- Interpreting feedback
- Implementing feedback

[29] This is only kind of true. If played poorly, you'd just be playing a weaker spirit, but leveraging Plaguebearers correctly can really boost your power.
[30] This section written by Lemurkin. I have revised it to be more coherent. The original opener was 'Sup mfers'. Thanks, Lemur

Understanding Feedback

You'll never make everyone happy

There are a grand total of 0 Spirit Island Spirits, and 0 possible spirit designs, that will make everyone happy. No matter where you are in development, a change that someone likes will be a change that someone else dislikes. Try not to attach your ego to your design; every spirit has people who just bounce off it, and hearing the feedback that something is just not fun to a playtester can really hurt. Perhaps the single most generally beloved spirit, Starlight, is also one that a lot of people (rightfully!) dislike. Strengthen your resolve and prepare for negative feedback, because addressing all negative feedback absolutely *cannot* be the purpose of feedback.

My philosophy when it comes to designing is that it's the job of the designer to make something that aligns with their own tastes or goals, and it's not their responsibility to make sure other people like it. If that's the case, and the only person you're trying to please with your design is yourself, then…

What's the point of feedback?

Generally, the purpose of feedback is to get a fresh perspective and figure out some direction of how you can change your project in a way that makes you as a designer happy, or alternatively, to validate that a project is approximately done. The *vast majority* of your feedback will be taking place in the first section, trying to figure out what substantial changes are needed. You shouldn't be confident that you're in the polishing phase until you've been in it for a while.

Asking for Feedback

Where do I ask for feedback?

Just about anywhere there's Spirit Island Enthusiasts, there's potential for all kinds of feedback, solicited or unsolicited, of quality ranging from absolutely useless one liners about why the spirit they haven't played is definitely overpowered to actually insightful playtest data. For a rough tier list for places to get playtest data from:

A Tier: Personal Playtesting
B Tier: Friends / Random Playgroups, Spirit of Creation / Second Wave Discords[31]

[31] Discord is a very solid format for feedback, primarily due to its lack of an upvote feature. The flatter hierarchy in conversation means that newer and active conversation is encouraged, rather than shorter "likeable" comments. / Also, Emily will help you with your design. And, if you listen to her feedback and implement it, she'll test it for you freely! I very much appreciate when people take my advice.

C Tier: Facebook[32], BoardGameGeek
D Tier: Reddit[33]

Keep your playtesters informed!

When sharing your design, it's important to communicate what kind of feedback you are looking for and what you are trying to do with your design. Trying to make an intuitive spirit for your boyfriend's first game of Spirit Island and want to know if new players can parse it? Aiming to make a spirit for seasoned veterans looking for a complex and puzzly challenge? Want to evoke the feeling of playing Lethal Company for some ungodly reason? Let your playtesters know whatever it is you're trying to optimize for!

Stay focused on the right issues!

Section 9 details the feedback you're looking to get - early on, you do not at all care about balance. A card might be way too good, but a simple test on your own can usually catch this. Follow the steps in order, and only stress about balance at the end - you want to focus on the interlinking of theme and mechanics, then on the cohesiveness of mechanics and your kit, then finally on balance. Balance changes can be as simple as adding fear or reducing range - it's much easier to address than other issues.

Interpreting Feedback

Ignoring Feedback

The MOST important thing I've learned about feedback is when to *ignore* it. Before I go into the rest of how to interpret feedback, perhaps the most important thing is remembering that not all feedback is *good*.

Not all feedback worth ignoring come from the same place, and ignoring feedback should happen on a spectrum as well. Sometimes, a person will just plainly have ideas and goals which are not at all aligned with what your vision for the design is[34]. All feedback is

---

[32] Facebook is probably the most "unique" of these groups, and perhaps the group with the lowest player skill of the lot. That doesn't mean that their feedback is *bad*. Having a larger presence of lower skill people means they're able to catch onto details that more experienced players may miss. They're also, at least in my experience, typically quite nice.
[33] Reddit not only has an extreme emphasis on an upvote system, but also has a very *rough* community which tends to get a kick out of being mean, *especially* when trying to do something more unique. They're not *totally* useless, but take it with couple dozen or hundred grains of salt.
[34] An easy example of this are misaligned power targets. If your playtester wants something that feels like Behemoth levels of strong, they're going to feel frustrated if you're aiming for a puzzly and tricky C tier design. And, of course, vice-versa if you're aiming for Behemoth power levels and your playtester is a pro

ultimately based on *something*, and it's important to figure out where that something originates from.

Typically, I find myself almost *always* ignoring specific mechanical ideas or implementations that go beyond pretty small changes. People asking for pretty heavy reworks indicates that your mechanical core came off as flawed *to that playtester*. Take note of that, but also be mindful that you:

Don't Justify, Listen!

When people are telling you their thoughts, do your best to listen and ask questions to get a better impression of how your player was feeling, and refrain from justifying *why* certain things are the way that they are. For example, if your player said "This card is really bad, so I forgot it right away", and "This spirit is really underpowered", instead of saying, "The card you constantly ignored is supposed to be one of the better cards and you just misplayed in not utilizing it", you can say something more like, "Were there any times where that card would've solved your problems?".

Remember, you won't be there for justifying your spirit to everyone, and also…

Emotions are always objective

The emotions may be different if they try something else, but you cannot dismiss emotions as incorrect. Ultimately, the only thing anyone can know for sure about art is how that art made them *feel*. If someone felt your spirit was too strong, and they suggest doing yadda yadda yadda, then it's probably better to just focus on the fact that they felt too strong and try to figure out why they felt that way. Maybe they drew Years of Little Rain and Constancy, maybe they played it into Sweden Habsburger[35] and won while resolving Grant Hatred. Once you know *why* they feel a certain way, and what they do feel, it's much more possible to make changes that not only address their emotions, but also stay aligned with your vision of the design. Make sure you seperate a person's suggestion from their emotions.

Implementing

Your goal while implementing feedback is to ensure that your design still matches your goals while tweaking it to be satisfactory to those who believe your goals would make for a design they would enjoy.

---

gamer who will only be satisfied if the game is built in a somewhat hostile manner to give them a "real" challenge.

[35] Habsburg Livestock Colony + Sweden is notorious for being a difficult adversary combo. If you ever take 8+ damage in a ravage, both Sweden blights count towards HLS loss condition and you just lose instantly.

Note: Lemur's still working on this section, but the outline is broadly correct.

Step 8: Your First Test

Finally, after only 40+ pages of guide, you're ready to try your Spirit!
If your Spirit requires another Spirit or wants it, pick a simple spirit to use as a benchmark partner - I will generally recommend Fathomless Mud of the Swamp. Otherwise, choose an adversary you're comfortable with and play it at a slightly easier level than your usual.

Throughout the game, you want to be taking rough notes:

1. What growth options did I want to take each turn? Was there a series of growths I wanted to take to get to a particularly good spot?
2. Did I have interesting ways to trade off short term and long term power?
3. How did my innates feel?
4. Did I want to draft new cards, or was I more compelled to just stick to my starting powers?
5. Were there any Powers I was very reluctant to Forget?
6. From turns 1 to 3, did I feel like I had good choices and the theme was felt?
7. From turns 4 to 6, did I feel like there was still a challenge in the game and that I would need to try and gain new cards to succeed?
8. When did I feel like the game would be over barring very bad luck?

Each of these questions should have a short answer (1-2 sentences) to guide your thoughts. With this, you can start your first revisions. If, after your first test, you feel like you need to make no revisions, you're being too kind on your design - you will absolutely and clearly need to change **something.**

Step 9: Iteration

A first note is - if you ever feel stuck with a design, set it down and come back to it. Fresh eyes will always help. You have three main steps to complete as you iterate

1. Structural: Each part of the kit reinforces the them and feels fitting.
2. Cohesion: Each part of the kit has a place in the gameplan.
3. Balance: Each part of the kit has a chance to shine without any part overshadowing the rest.
    a. Making your Spirit balanced in comparison to other Spirits can be more difficult - try not to stress about that until the end of Balancing.

Tweaks in Steps 2 and 3 will open up Steps 1 and 2 again - your Spirit will change quite a bit over time, so always feel free to circle back and ensure it still meets your criteria.

I would very much recommend asking for feedback only in the steps that matter - when you're working on Structural components, balance doesn't really matter unless something is egregiously out of sync.

Structural

(Completion of Theme)
The first component is ensuring that your **theme** and **mechanics** match. For each part of the kit, ask yourself and testers:

1. What emotion is this evoking?
2. Did players enjoy using this effect? (Unfortunately, if the answer is 'a lot', the answer is likely to nerf it, but that comes in balance).[36]
3. What theme did you feel this connected to?

Cohesion

(Completion of Mechanics)
After Structural Analysis, you want to do Cohesion.
Questions to ask testers:

1. Did each mechanic help support other mechanics, or did they feel like it was standing out on its own?
2. Were any growth **options** (g1, g2, g3) so dominant or so weak that players would focus on them above all else?
3. Do players feel like your goals are met? Here, you should outline your goals for the design and see if players believe it's correct.

Balance

Finally, after Cohesion, you can handle Balance.
Questions to ask testers:

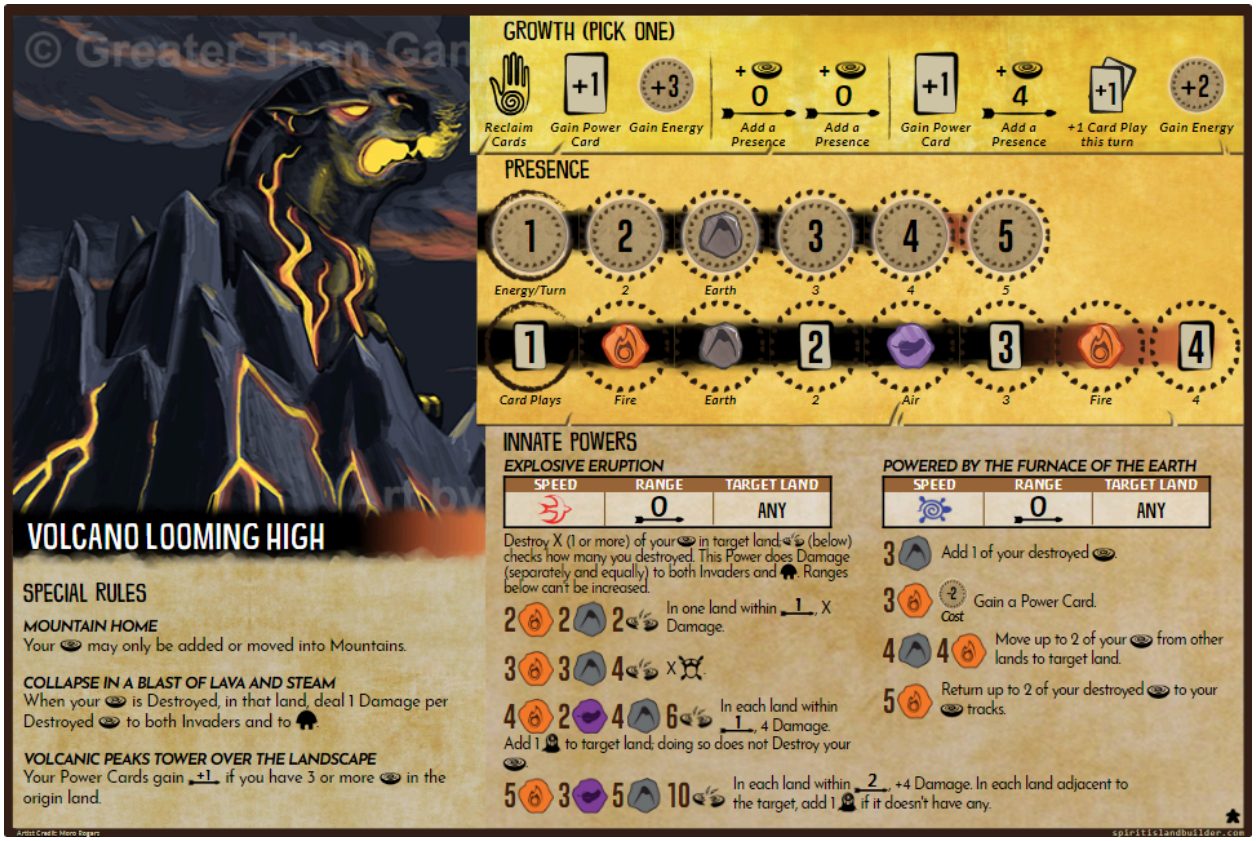
4. What effects did you want to use the most, and which the least? Which power cards or innates did you want to use the most, and which the least? (If these line up, that card is likely too central to the game plan)
5. Were any growth lines so dominant that players would stop considering them as options? Did players feel compelled to focus on bottom track, on top track, or on mixing between the two, or did players try out each path and felt they were equal?
    a. You want players to actually try each path. It's pretty easy to nerf bottom or top track exclusively to iterate - just take Energy off Reclaim or shift the nodes on your tracks later. Mixed tracks usually indicate that your middle innate tiers combined with Majors are very worth using; this is generally harder to match, but consider moving elements later on track.

[36] To go into a bit more detail - you want to nerf things until you find the point at which they stop being enjoyable, then tweak it a little back up from there. Spirits should shoot for a minimum amount of power, as less power means more replayability generally. Of course, some people just really want to play the best spirits and relax through a game - maybe that's your goal! There's nothing inherently wrong with making a Spirit very strong.

6. Do players feel like they have a rich tapestry of options for the first 3 turns?
7. Do players feel like they have various paths to victory and loss in the first 6 turns?
8. Do players still have issues with the design?

Balance Appendix I: Volcano

Let's go over Volcano again:



Reclaim All, Gain Card, Gain Energy: Volcano's innates are actually fairly tame on the later levels thanks to them not being able to be used every turn. Energy is worth about **1** as a result. Reclaim All is also worth a little less **because** Volcano has a growth that gives an extra card play that it cannot use at the same time as reclaiming. Reclaim is worth about 4 Energy[37] here.

Growth 1
Reclaim: 4 Energy.
Gain Card: 3 Energy.
3 Energy: 3 Energy.

That's 10 Energy worth of budget. Earlier, I said Spirits should have about 10 Energy of Budget across tracks, innates, and growths. This… consumes about all that budget. Fascinating, right?

[37] These numbers are vibes based. Sorry if you want a method to the madness!

This Reclaim is incredible - this Energy probably could've afforded to be 2, except…

Growth 2
Presence 0, Presence 0:
(3.8)x*2* + (2.0)x2 = 11.6 Energy.

Wow, even better? Surely we can't get better-

Growth 3
Presence 4: 4+2 Energy = 6
Gain Card: 3 Energy
+1 Play: 3 Energy
2 Energy: 2 Energy
= 14 Energy
…I stand corrected.

So, Volcano's growths are… imbalanced and way too high value. Let's go over how they tried to compensate for its high growths and why they failed or didn't:

1. Its uniques are somewhat overcosted, high cost, and don't give much for splash elements. This makes it harder to pivot to thresholding Majors, but… g3 gives extra plays for doing so, so this doesn't work great as a nerf.
2. The plays track is awful - almost as bad as Fractured Days. … Except g3 gives a third play easily which thresholds quite a few Majors.
3. Elements on its tracks aren't worth all that much. They help with flexibility, which helps you go for off element Majors and support cards, but that's about it, because…
4. Its innates give not much value beyond the first two tiers for each, but give a lot of value for those tiers.. With Presence addition's value already factored in, the left innate is "Destroy 2 presence to deal 2 damage at range 1" for 2 fire, 2 earth. For 3 Earth, you get 2 damage, which is worth getting but not knocking your socks off.[38]
5. The higher levels of the innates are just Bad - Powered by the Furnace of the Earth's last 2 tiers are never something you shoot for, while the last 2 tiers of Explosive Eruption require both time to build up and sacrifice of previous value.
6. To keep pushing Plays, it needs to have Energy, but Volcano also wants to spend Energy on its right innate to gain Cards. This makes it want to push top track more, constraining its ability to place two presence at once.[39] But your g3 is so good you don't care.
7. Even if it weren't for its very high value g3, once it gets to 2 energy/3 card plays and gets a good hand, it could just reclaim loop it and be set for the rest of the game - 4 energy, 3 plays is a game-winning board state.

[38] Apologies to my flip flop wearers. Unless you also wear socks. I rescind any apologies.
[39] This is part of why the Growth 3 is so good - that Energy can be used to buy cards too! Wow, what a design. How this is close to balanced is beyond me.

8. …and even if both g1 and g3 were weak, g2 could grow you quickly and get you to a good track state with ease.

Budget can be spent in many places, but you don't want to mitigate weaknesses with other parts of the kit or else you have far too much power.

Balance Appendix II: Roots

Another example of how to spend budget and some design lessons is Towering Roots -
Growth 2: Add Presence 1, Gain Card, Add Vitality at Incarna
Growth 3: Add Presence 3, Gain Card, Gain 1 Energy, switch a Presence for Incarna.

Vitality is worth 3[40] Energy, so theoretically it's way better than Growth 2. In practice, Growth 3 is taken the vast majority of the time.

Why? The Spirit doesn't have the same access to high-Energy growth options or the ability to stockpile Energy thanks to its unique cost and tracks, with its top track being only able to get 2 Energy/turn unless you abandon getting to 3 Card Plays early. This Energy is critical to stockpile and afford low-cost Majors while attempting to threshold them. A lack of Energy also pushes Reclaim's value higher - reclaiming a low cost hand helps manage your Energy economy just as well as a trickle of Energy does.

BA3: NI Growths

To go over a brief analysis of NI Spirits' balances of growths/tracks, complexity up[41]:

- Behemoth' growths are mostly alright in balance. Reclaim being paired with the Empower lends to very stale growth patterns (g2, g2/g3, g4, g2, g1 is the opener 90% of the time). Its innate is too free overall, and should have harder requirements for damage for every level past the first.
- Hearth-Vigil's growths are… not balanced in practice. Easy access to Reclaim and a very strong left innate means it wants to find Sun/Earth cards quickly and loop them to prevent Blight, and with a very strong/undercosted support it has no reason not to.
- Towering Roots of the Jungle's been covered; the innates are actually pretty well costed. In retrospect, the Earth spot on top track really should've been either 3+earth or a plant as it's a pretty painful dead spot at present. Power could have been taken out of the kit elsewhere. The Empower is also a trap for new players as Vitality in one land is a waste of actions.

---

[40] This makes Vitality incredibly obnoxious to put on a card, by the way. Half-energy value is impossible to find. Making Blooming 1 cost would break the kit from its lack of Energy, though, which is how it escaped testing as a 0 cost despite having about 3 Energy of value for a card that should probably cost 2.5 Energy.

[41] I'm working with others on an NI rebalance project, because so many of the Spirits are very close. You might see this in the future.

- Wandering Voice should just cut the Energy off Reclaim. Its right innate tier 5 should be much worse. The g3 should probably be 2 Energy OR the top Air should be 3+air; on the former the devs were worried about its immediate-impact value, but your tracks are pretty bad so it would've probably worked out. Other than that, solid design - just too much value from getting to 4 plays and looping.
- Relentless Gaze's Ravage Skip should've been a Build Skip. It was tried as a 1 Energy Ravage Skip but the kit isn't designed for it. The 3 sun, 1 water, 1 plant tier both costs you effort to get and also gives you nothing for it - Energy is nearly always better in Sun's hands than anyone else's. The 1 moon tier probably could've been 2 moon, but changing the Ravage Skip to a Build Skip would've made this okay. Great otherwise.
- Wounded sacrificed too much decision space to lower complexity - it has no track or growth decision early which makes it boring, and its innate has far too much power later so that becomes disinteresting. The starting innates are well designed access-wise, though.
- Breath of Darkness Down Your Spine's 4 moon tiers are too strong and accessible, and the move 1 presence on bottom makes the third growth sad to use. (In a rebalance project, we have actually tested this - removing the move 1 presence makes the game more interesting by introducing a more tight presence puzzle!) Fine otherwise, a good model overall.
- Dances Up Earthquakes could use a lot of power cuts and should not be used as a guide. Amusingly, its growths and tracks are pretty fine in balance and decision space.

Vengeance is a Spirit whose track/innate designs are a solid guideline to follow - a bit too strict on the innates, but otherwise fantastic.[42]

Final Steps: Artwork and Completion

You're just about done. Most likely, you've been using placeholder artwork from the internet or AI art for your final design.

This is where you finally decide - how do I want my Spirit to look forever?

You have 3 rough options:

Fitting art from the internet

Search engines grant access to a massive repository of images you can draw from for your designs.
Reasons to use:

1. It both costs nothing and people that host their art usually state the licenses under which they're willing to have it used - generally, these allow for noncommercial free use.

[42] This section is a little too difficult to write in impassive tone - lot of opinion from testing!

2. You'll avoid stepping into any issues with AI art; custom content communities tend to be kinder about this due to understanding of costs, but be warned.

Detriments:

1. It only kind of matches the art styles of Spirit Island.
2. You don't get any actual view of your Spirit.

AI art

AI art, at the present, is controversial at best - to my knowledge, no repositories source artwork from artists with their permission, are easy to access, and generate quality art.

Reasons to use:

1. It costs nothing and gives you art that decently matches your Spirit.
2. It requires much less effort than the other two to find matching artwork.

Reasons against:

3. Ethics, obviously.[43]
4. The artwork very rarely actually matches the art style of Spirit Island.
5. AI art tends to focus on generating people and one-note versions of your Spirit, which can lead to your Spirit's theme getting very muddled.

Commissioning art

Artwork is expensive - art for a full Spirit will probably run you $500 if a creator is generous.[44] But generally, this is what you'll want to do if you're confident in your design

Reasons to use:

6. You have full control over the finished product.
7. Posting it with commissioned art will genuinely excite people to see a new Spirit designed - think of the feedback for the custom art a person made for the Apocrypha Spirit Spreading Rot.
8. It can be tailored readily into the art style of Spirit Island or to your personal preferences.

Reasons against:

9. Cost, obviously. A Spirit with 4 unique powers and 1 panel art should cost $200 per piece - you can likely obtain it for $100 each if the artist is excited about it.
10. This option will take the longest amount of time by far. Be prepared to wait; luckily, the art coming in will excite you to develop and play more.
11. Once you've obtained the finished product, tweaking it requires a lot of skill or an additional cost.

With artwork done, and your iteration finished, you can call your Spirit…

---

[43] I've written a free use guide for people on the internet to make custom content. I think I'm also allowed to believe AI art is presently unethical to use. If you staunchly disagree, feel free to generate a custom content guide using the internet - I'm sure it'll help you.

[44] This is the quote from the art for Mushroom's Refuge - a friend could do it for much cheaper, if you have one that's willing.

Complete!

What an exciting step!
I hope you had fun reading this guide and that it helped further your understanding of Spirit design.

Revision notes

This guide is currently in Version **2.** This version was completed July 2, 2024.

Version 1 did not have Balance Appendixes, instead including these in the main sections.