

Research Ideas for Level Design

MY FAVORITE VIDEO TO LOOK AT: [Aquarius Reef Base | JONATHAN BIRD'S BLUE WORLD](#)

AQUARIUS REEF BASE

THE ONLY UNDERWATER LAB IN THE WORLD AND ITS RIGHT HERE IN FLORIDA!!!



Looks like a Divine Beast, doesn't it?

Aquarius Reef Base is a GREAT point of reference. We're not copying this lab one-to-one, or at all but the FACILITIES and its CONSTRUCTION can be sources of inspiration for our game's LEVEL DESIGN.

LAB CONSTRUCTION EXAMPLE:

The only way divers can get inside the lab is through an **entry hatch via a "wet porch"** (@ [5:18](#) in video)

- We can have 1 **entry hatch** at the very beginning of the Tutorial that allows players into the Sunlight Zone "Level" (technically you are already in it since the lab starts out in the Sunlight Zone).
- During an event or sequence where the player needs to exit the lab and go into the water for whatever reason, they can do it through an entry hatch in a wet porch
- An entry hatch is a safe method of entering and exiting the lab. How could this be altered in later "levels" to be risky or even dangerous?

LAB FACILITY EXAMPLE

A **life support buoy** pumps fresh oxygen to Aquarius and provides electricity (@ [4:27](#) in video)

- Power needs to run in our laboratory to access lights, oxygen (not necessarily as a mechanic), and technology there.
- The lab becomes more destroyed as the player descends deeper (e.g. lights not working) so this implies that electricity and technology would begin to fail later on.
- If technology and electricity is needed for a puzzle or during an event, how would the player access it? What sort of risks or benefits would come from trying to mess with the technology in the lab?

Other facilities mentioned in the lab

1. **SAFETY LINES**: these are meant to lead divers back to Aquarius (@ [12:27](#) in video)
 - For underwater sections or in the event where the player needs to exit the lab, safety lines can be used as a guide or waypoint.
 - Would also be a possible solution for not allowing player to SWIM AWAY from lab (getting off the safety line or too far away would result in a fail state)
2. **Cameras**: these are connected to the life support buoy and signaled to an office on shore (@ [9:28](#) in video)
 - Cameras can be an important function throughout the lab (if Camera POV Swapping mechanic goes through)
3. Underwater gazebos: these allow divers to refill oxygen (@ [10:49](#) in video)
 - Possible “safe zone” or hiding spot for deeper areas and underwater parts?

Let's talk MECHANICS

1. **Scanning for objects** - currently via Echo Gun (subject to change). Ideally would **reveal hidden or obscured objects** that could be informational (lore bits) or useful (items and pickups) to the player.
 - a. Can also be as simple as **highlighting** if an object can be used or if it has an interaction (Turning on a computer to see a note, cameras, etc.)
 - b. Additionally, I think it'd be cool if you could scan Monsters and Creatures after you've encountered them - sort of like a Pokedex or an encyclopedia (Monsterpedia?) to track their attributes (Scent, Sight, Smell) and behavior (Neutral, Hostile, etc.)
2. Stunning or briefly repelling monsters
3. **Diving Knife** - this item will be used by the player to "cut", "pry open", "hammer", or "dig". Sharp but sturdy.
 - a. Dynamic enough to be implemented in a lot of puzzles with multiple uses. Or go the easy route with “Press E to cut” “Press E to pry open”.
4. Inventory system

Possible Mechanics (IDEAS SO FAR)

1. Camera POV swapping - echo gun tethers (connects) to a camera and the player can swap to view the pov of the camera/object. could be helpful for scoping out an area, puzzles, exploring, etc. sort of like a security cam function

- a. PROS: can provide additional environmental puzzles and other means of exploring areas. Could be another way to find more hidden objects by scanning through swapped POV
 - b. CONS: cameras need to be carefully placed to not ruin horror aspect or surprise of monsters nearby
- 2. Lure or bait for monsters?
- 3. invis

TUTORIAL EXAMPLE THAT INTRODUCES SCENARIO AND UNIQUE MECHANIC:

1. Player starts out in a rescue submarine that is submerging in the water and flying through a coral reef. The player can look around while they are onboard and observe the coral reef. It's apparent that because of the small windows, it's hard to see, so the player's crewmate tells them to use the [Scanning Function] on their [Echo Gun]. To the player's surprise, it reveals the abundance of fish and marine life swimming around and inhabiting the coral reef (establishes theme of Sunlight Zone: Awe).
2. Just as the submarine was getting close to the lab, it is suddenly hit by a large unidentified [Thing] that results in the submarine being damaged and marooned. ((This can be filled out by either the crewmates going back to safety on shore or staying at the submarine for whatever reason))
3. Player goes into the lab on their own through the entry hatch. Realizing how weirdly empty the lab is, they use the [Scanning Function] in hopes of finding people or any signs of life but instead... it informs them of hostile creatures in the area. Dun Dun Dun... (Hopeful situation and theme has been flipped on its head)

These 3 points establish TONE, UNIQUE MECHANIC, MAIN SCENARIO, and THEME. Starts off whimsical, and hopeful - "Everything will go well in this rescue mission!" □ "Whoa, WTF is going on?"