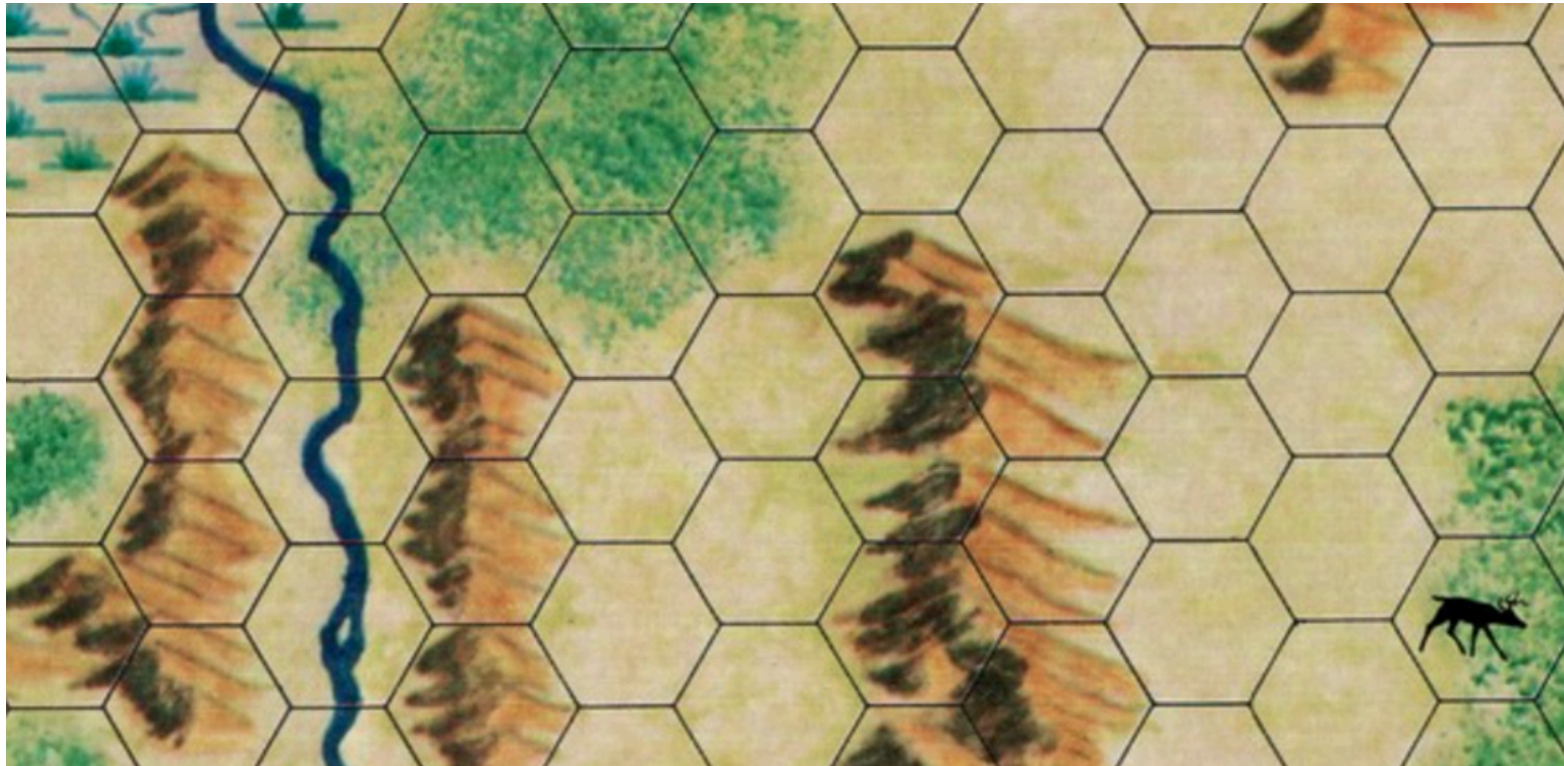


Hex Stocking Example

Occasionally, I am asked how I go about stocking Hexes for Wilderness Adventuring. Here's a little demonstration I put together that attempts to cover the process.

Let's stock a Hex!



Disclaimer: I've been told my Hexes are a bit on the *densely stocked* side compared to most. They are generally not sized by **Distance** but by **Time** (to interface with **Resource Consumption/Procedural Checks**, and discourage straight-line Travel "as the Gryphon Flies" when Roads and such aren't present). You may find yourself settling on a different scale (six-miles seems to be a popular choice), but my **Mantra** is that woefully **Empty Hexes** should be avoided at all costs. Even the most **Barren Places** should contain *Something* if you look, and create **Choices** (because this, coupled with **Wonder** and a **Sense of Discovery** is what makes **Travel** interesting).

Name Your Regions

The first thing I do is make sure a given Hex is part of a Named Region. This name can appear in Rumors, on Maps, and is referred to by Locals, etc. We'll place this Hex in the *Howling Hills*. It's a series of crowded low foothills (only a few are taller than a Barn, and it can get eerily uniform in places) covered in scraggly grass with the occasional Tree/Bush. Perhaps it was the site of a duel between Enormous Elementals, long long ago.

Naming these Regions becomes pretty useful to place them in the larger context of the World, allowing interactions to refer to these places by their **Regional Name**. Sometimes certain Regions can start earning a bit of a **Reputation** on their own (*"We're never going back to the **Scabrous Swamps** again!"*) As **Players** Explore the world, they're building up Knowledge about the **Dangers** and **Qualities** of these different places, that helps them make informed decisions when it comes to **Travel** as well as for later Tiers like **Domain Play**.



Populate Encounter Tables

My next step is to work on the **Encounter Tables**. I like doing this step early in the process because as you'll see, it gives me so much fodder for the later stages. I can roll on this table to help me determine Stocking for Lairs, Tracks/Traces, Factions, Seed Rumor Tables, and so forth. Since they feed so much when it comes to Stocking and developing the **Character** of a Place, I like to do them up-front (see the table to the right).

This is largely just a few Encounters I selected from the **Wilderness Encounter Tables** for this type of **Terrain**. Sometimes I'll just roll on them to see what comes up if I don't have a clear idea of what might inhabit a given **Region**. I like to add a bit of flavor to them when I can, to make them distinctive (particularly when it comes to standard **Fauna**). I find the day/night axis a little helpful for different types of **Wandering Monster Checks** (it lets me put the more **Nocturnal Things** in the right context!), but you could also tie it to **Watches** or other **Procedures**. I also try to find an excuse to roll those lovely d12s whenever I can!

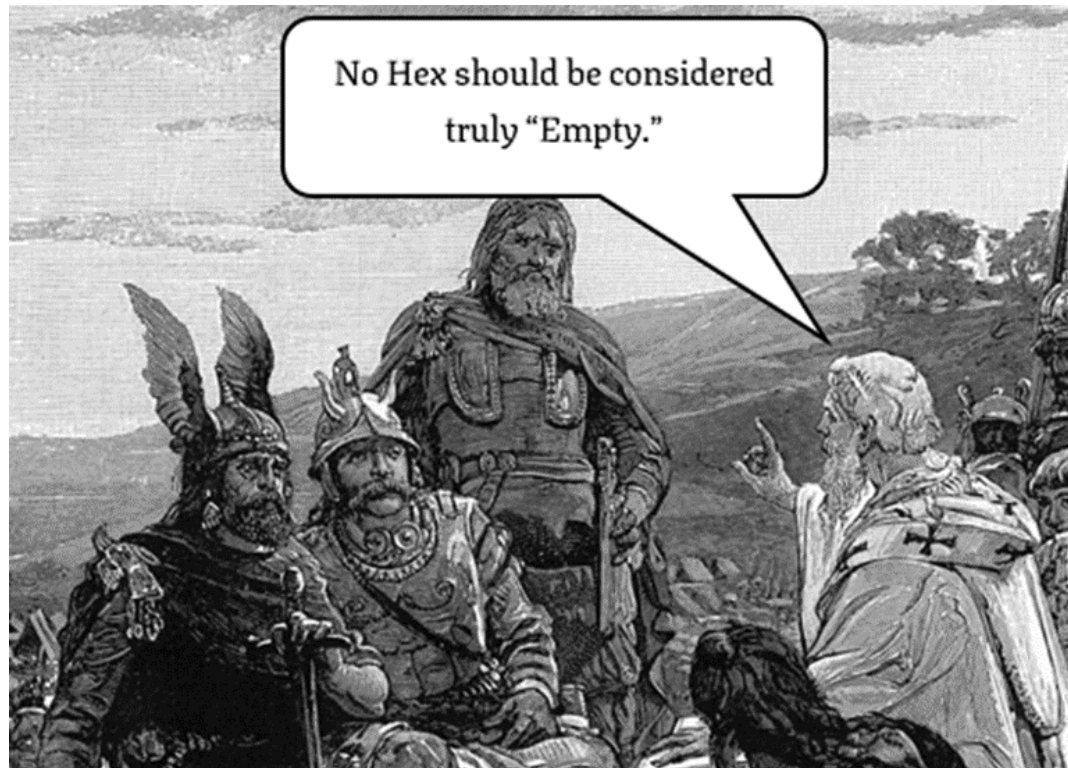
I try to also include some Encounters from *adjacent/nearby Regions* as well. Perhaps they're just passing through, or leveraging a **Resource** found within these Hexes in some way. If these are **Factions** the **Players** have interacted with before, even better! Creating things that *link your Hexes together* is a great way to ground them in the context of a larger **Setting**.

The Howling Hills		
Day	1	Shield-headed Ankhegs (1d6)
	2	Painted Tarpan (Wild Horse) (1d0 x 10)
	3	Brightseam Ore Merchants (Dwarfs) (1d20)
	4	Dirge Hawks (Giant) (1d3)
	5	Cleargully Bandits (2d8)
	6	Horned Wolf Pack (2d6)
	7	Tinehorn Antelope Herd (3d10)
	8	Three-Leg's Blink Dog Pack (1d6)
Night	9	Tiger Beetles (2d4)
	10	Hobgoblins of the Cracked Tower (4d6)
	11	Dire Wolves (2d4)
	12	Werewolves (2d6)

Generating Features

Once this **Encounter Table** is complete: On to Stocking! My preference is generally for 3-6 *Obvious Features* in my Hexes, and 1-2 *Hidden Things* that aren't located along direct Paths/Routes or found easily. You can season these numbers to taste of course! Starting out smaller never hurt anyone, and sometimes if a **Place** isn't going to be *immediately important* it doesn't deserve as much attention right now.

I roll 1d4+2 and get a 1 (3 **Obvious Features**), and a quick d6 for another 1 (odds = 1, evens = 2: 1 **Hidden Thing**). Pretty sparse Hex if I do say so myself! I think I'll lean into this a bit with my portrayal and descriptions as it becomes a bit more **Steppe-like** in my mind's eye. But the important thing is that it's not "Empty." There are **Things** to Interact with here that can introduce **Choices** and make **Travel** more interesting.



To figure out what these Features *are*, I sometimes roll on the standard “Dungeon Stocking” table for **Inspiration**. Translating those familiar results a bit to work for Overland purposes:

Overland Stocking Table		
d6	Feature	Chance of Resource
1-2	Landmark/Discovery	1-in-6
3-4	Lair (from Encounter Tables)	3-in-6
5	Special/Site-Based Location	None
6	Hazard	2-in-6

An “Empty Room” becomes a **Landmark/Discovery**, “Monster” is now a **Lair**, “Special” will usually be something **Site-based** or one of my [Wilderness Hexes](#) (more can be found under the [hexes] label), A “Trap” becomes something **Hazardous** (some ideas for this in my table here: [Wilderness Woes & Hinterland Hazards](#).) For the adjunct “Treasure” roll I try to turn this into some kind of **Resource**, either with intrinsic and immediate value/usefulness or something that can be exploited by the **Players** at a later point in time.

Of course, one shouldn’t feel compelled to fetter themselves to the results here, if you want to dig a **Dungeon**, then dig one! If you have a neat or compelling idea for a **Hazard** or **Discovery**...then place it!

Sometimes that Sea of Plaintive and Empty Polygons can be a bit intimidating though. The Map is ready to go, and might do a great job at conveying the **Terrain**, but by itself it may do little else to invite **Adventure** or **Exploration**. So using this table can sometimes jumpstart my creativity to get a few things placed, and I’m often surprised how quickly things go after I’ve hopped over that initial hurdle!

Feature Examples

Using that Trusty **Dungeon Stocking** Table, I roll on this for the **Obvious Features**:

I: Empty, Treasure = Landmark + Resource

II: Monster, Treasure = Lair + Resource

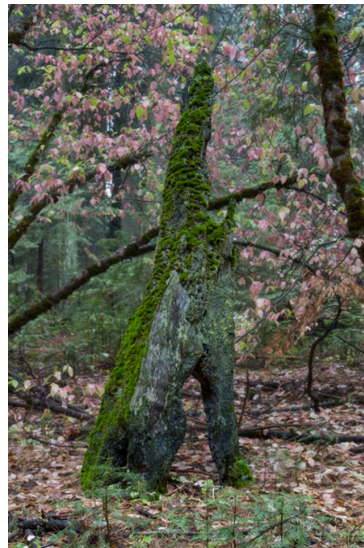
III: Monster = Lair

And the lonely **Hidden Thing**:

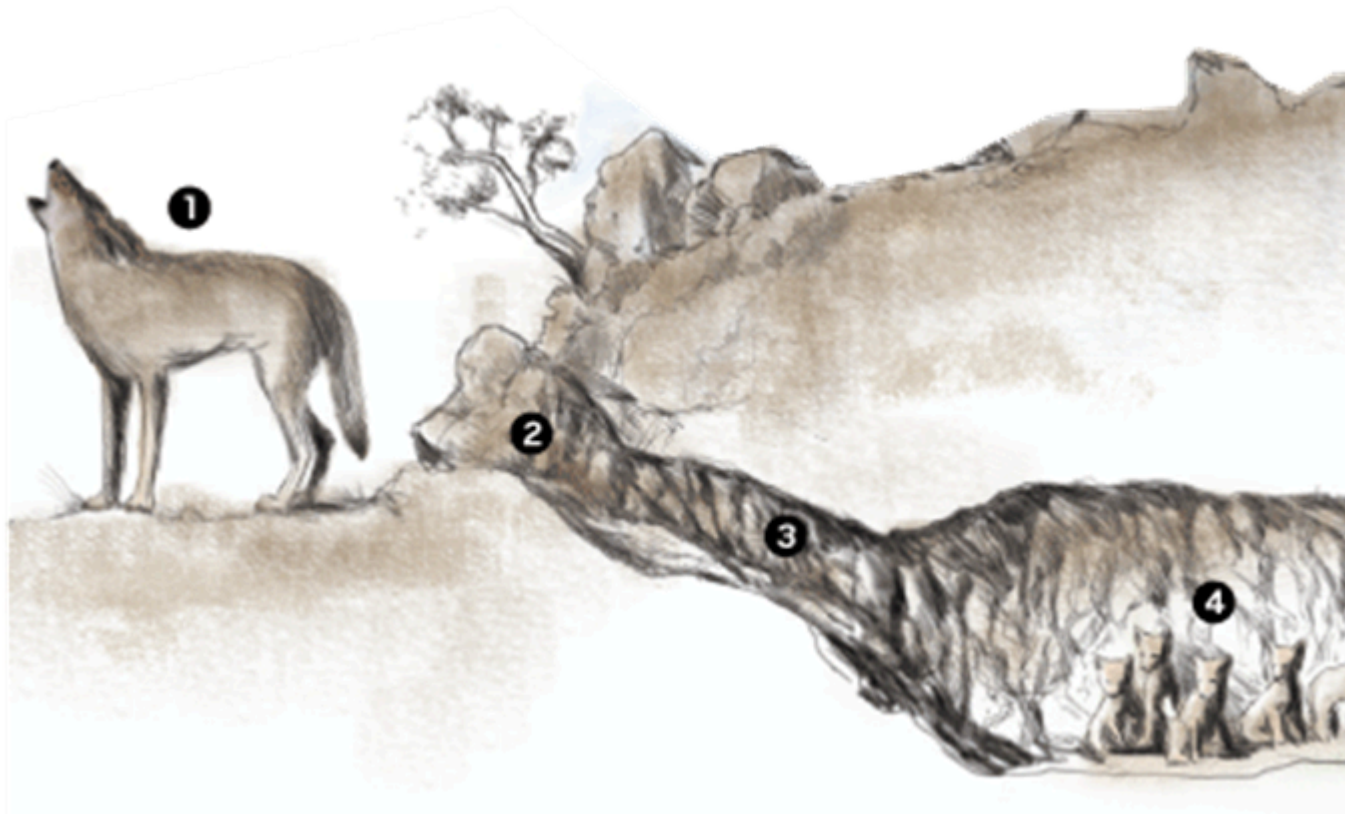
IV: Special

So, for these **Features**, I consult some of my [Tables](#) and come up with more tangible ideas to Key the Hex with:

I: A Landmark from my [Discovery Table](#). **54: Gnarled Trunk of a Wolfperch resembles its namesake: a Slavering Canine** (nifty, I do love it when a random die roll decides to play nice with a Theme!). I'll make this a distinctive and huge Tree Stump (there aren't many Trees out here so conceivably this would be important for orienteering), but what's the **Resource**? Hmm. Perhaps it's **Petrified**, a small chip of stone from it, if swallowed, can prevent **Lycanthropy** for up to 1d6 days.



II: Lair (1d12 on the **Encounter Table** and I get: **Horned Wolf Pack**) I imagine this would take the form of Dens. Gouged in the hillsides are the Breeding Dens of the **Horned Wolf Pack** (maybe they use those Horns also see use for shoveling the soil to build these!). We'll place the majority of our Wolves here (in the form of the "Lair" **Number Appearing**). For the **Resource**, I'm thinking a nearby **Water Source** might be nice for the Wolves and their Prey (those Horses/Antelopes), but also handy for the **Players** who may need to stock up. Perhaps a Pond is within sight of the Dens. I'll roll up one of my [Magic Pools](#) for giggles: **20 Exposed to Moonlight, Drinker becomes Invisible to Magic Users for a week**. That's fun!

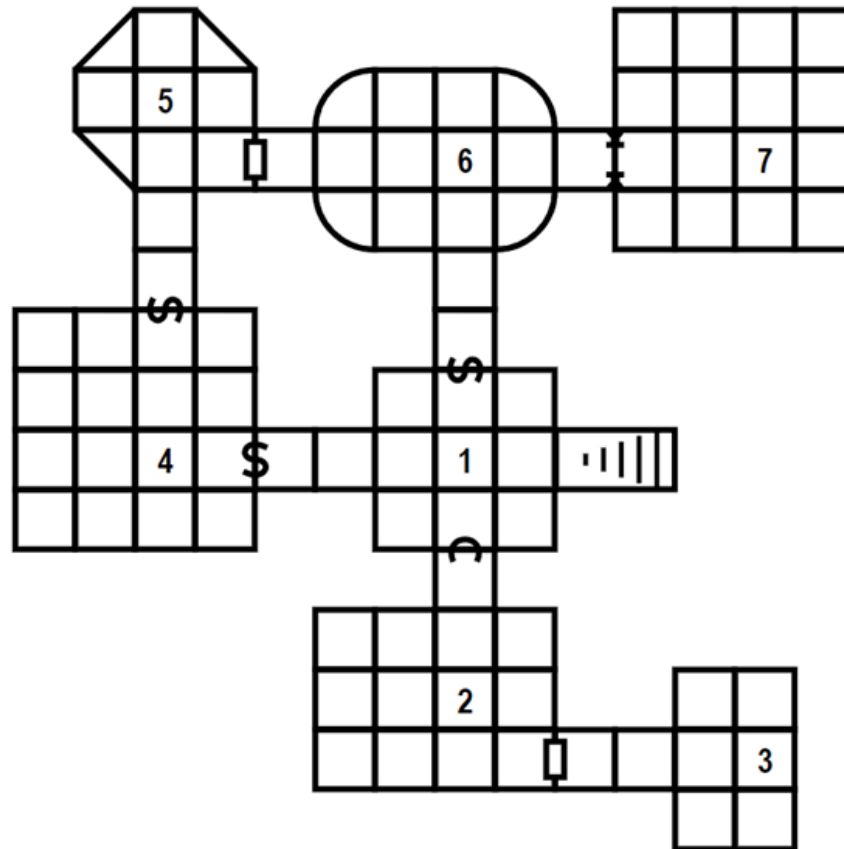


III Lair (1d12 on table = **Blink Dog Pack**) More Hillside habitats here, but these are probably a little less obvious or harder to *find entrances for* (they can just blink inside them after all) so we'll place some *confusing* tracks that suddenly start and stop around here. I like the idea of making these more **uniform** in size and arrangement to fit the **Lawful** nature of these Canines, maybe with some kind of Hierarchy. The **Lair** Number Appearing will be present here, and their **Treasure Type C** will also be found in one of the Dens, but due to their **Alignment** this could be a helpful **Faction** for aid/special knowledge about the Hex and its dangers. I'll flesh out their Leader "Three Legs" and probably make them a **Cleric** or something. There will be some *Silver Weapons* in the Treasure from unlucky **Werewolf** Hunters.



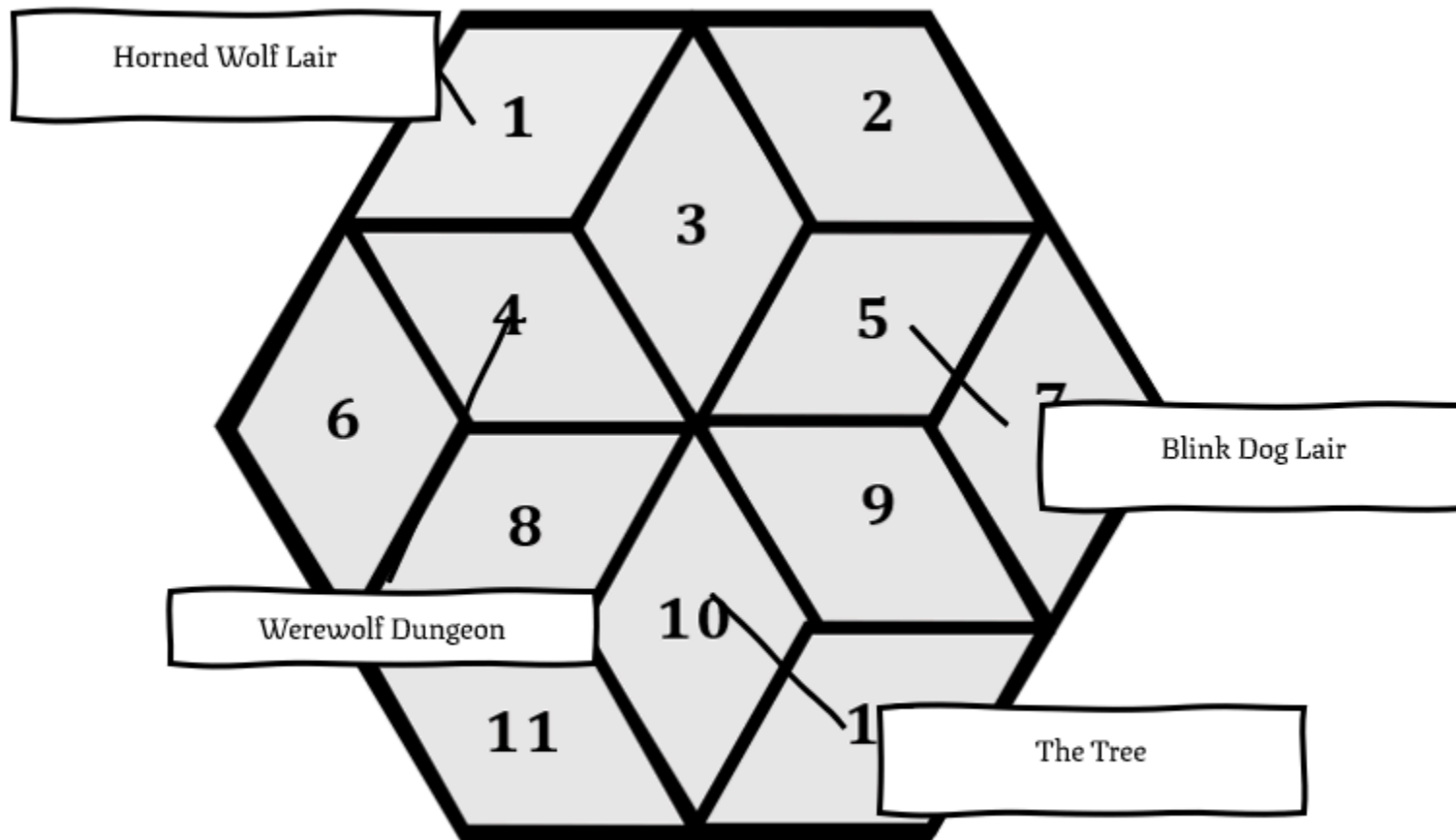
And Last, but certainly not least: the **Special/Hidden Thing**.

IV Let's have a **Dungeon**. Sometimes these are more *Obvious* because there will sometimes be trails/paths from the Denizens going to-and-fro, but in this case it's pretty hard to find. I'll have it also serve as a base of operations for those **Werewolves** that I'd like to flesh out as a **Faction** here. Since they might only leave to Hunt (in **Wolf** Form) the Tracks and Traces they leave will be a lot *less obvious* considering the other Denizens of the Hex. I'll add it to my to-do list for a **20-minute Dungeon** or something (maybe I'll end up doing a separate demo of that process eventually!). I'll sometimes just use the Hex-Describe [\[dungeon\]](#) rules I've worked on in the past to get one I like, and then just do a little tweaking as necessary if I'm even more pressed for time:



Where Is Everything?

Now for the “Where Is Everything Step” that helps me determine how these features “relate” to each other (for the purpose of Travel along those Paths/Trails/Routes, as well as Factional Conflicts and such). I usually end up using one of my [Tessellations](#):



I threw four quick d12s (one for each of the **Features**) and this is what I ended up with: 10, 1, 5, 4. These are only *relative* locations really, **Travel** through the Hex is still based on **Direction**, but occurs on paths/routes/trails. The **Obvious Things** are likely to be Encountered based on this **Direction of Travel** because they will have these kinds of **Trails** and **Routes of Travel** associated with them.

Rumors/Hooks

Finally, I'll use the **Hex Contents/Encounter Tables** I've generated in prior steps to whip up a **Rumor Table** in order to concretely tie this place to **Potential Adventure**. I tend to do these using a more "in-world voice" most of the time, and sometimes I'll only do d10/d6 and fold them into larger tables for a given **Named Region**. All have a Grain of Truth, but some might be a *bit off* or *not entirely accurate*. I like to use these to sprinkle in a bit of **Mystery**, and to pique the **Players'** curiosity in addition to **Telegraphing** some **Dangers**. See if you can spot where these **Rumors** "came from" in the previous steps!

Howling Hills Hex #X Rumors	
1	Cleargullies sometimes break the Wild Horses out here, until those Dogs chase 'em away
2	Sound of those Dirge Hawks will chill your blood. Seen 'em carry off a Foal once!
3	Those Brightseam Boys haul good Ingots through there, but avoid it during the Full Moon
4	Saw some of them Antelope drinking, but Waspen our Wizard said he couldn't see 'em at all!
5	Used to be a Witch out there that sold Stone Charms, out by that Wolf Tree
6	Was out Grazing my Goats when the Ground Started Moving. Big Bugs ate three of 'em
7	Sometimes see Campfire Smoke out there in the early Morning, must be bringing their own wood to burn
8	Camped out there once, lemee tell you: Noisy Nights! We barely got a wink of Sleep with all that yowling and snarling
9	Thought he was a goner after getting Gored by those Horned Wolves, but he swears a 3-legged Dog licked him back to health
10	My Great Aunt never went out Hunting there without at least half of her Quiver's Arrows Silvered
11	Biggest Damn Wolf I ever Seen. Size of a Cow! Swear I heard it barking in Goblin to the rest of the Pack
12	Came across a whole mess of dead Tinehorns once, like something was killing them for Sport

I sometimes re-skin these on the fly to reflect that indispensable **Information Currency** from fellow Travelers/Denizens of Adjacent Hexes and so forth, but they're usually obtainable in the nearest Settlements/Havens as well.

Finishing Up

All that's left to do at this point is pretty **Optional**. I'll maybe generate a few [Encounter Activities](#) from my tables for some of the Wandering Monsters to have at hand to keep them interesting (sometimes this takes place in prior Steps if I'm stymied). I might consult my [Wilderness Vignette](#) Tables for some more inspiration on sights/sounds to convey to the **Players** during their **Exploration** through this area (or roll these on the fly). I may decide I want to generate some intriguing [Plant](#) or [Tree Names](#) for local **Flora** (I find these sometimes work really well for conveying changes in **Terrain** when moving from Hex to Hex), and maybe a few [Fish](#) for that **Pond** as well. I'll need some Treasure/Names for the **Blink Dog Lair**, and to whip up that **Dungeon** or grab a one-pager, but for the most part, I consider this Hex "keyed" for my purposes 😊.

If it seems like the **Players** might want to spend more time in this **Hex**, naturally I can always generate a few more **Hidden Features** down the road, but no **Hex** should be static or Set in Stone...the choices and activities the **Players** undertake within can easily alter it, and in fact: They should! The impact their **Adventures** have on an area is always a very powerful source of inspiration for creating New Things for me, and can help a Place seem more **Dynamic** and **Alive**. As a bonus, **Players** get to see how their **Engagement** with the Contents of a given Hex makes a tangible impact.

All told, I only think it took about 10 minutes or so to Stock this one (it took longer finding suitable images for this **Example!**), but if it was something I was *relatively certain* my **Players** would be spending more time in, I might devote a little more time and effort to it. I'm a firm believer in trying to focus a lot of my **Preparation** on things that will be immediately usable in **Play** when I can, but the **Temptation** of a lovingly fully-stocked **Hex Map**, ready and waiting for **Countless Adventures** is always a very strong one!

Hope this Example helps illustrate my Process a little more, and provides some ideas/inspiration for sprinkling more Features in your own Hex Maps!

Happy Hex-Crawling!