



DEFENDERS - of the - Wild

Rulebook

War has come to the Wild.

For millennia, animals of the Commonwood have weathered shifting alliances and the cycle of hundred-year seasons, building their diverse societies on the two principles of the Wild: *everything is connected* and *nothing lasts forever*. When Order flamereaders predicted an especially long, brutal winter coming in just 25 years, however, some began to doubt the wisdom of relying on these ancient principles alone. Rumors say that a secret group of powerful animals began conspiring a few years ago, in a hidden underground bunker, to find a way to conquer the cycle of the seasons. There, they worked to fuse formidable technologies and perilous magic to develop a new source of endless warmth and power—a foolish quest to circumvent the Wild that went terribly awry.

The hubris of the failed experiment has indeed threatened to disrupt the cycle of the seasons, just not in the ways the conspiring animals had hoped. Instead, their machinations have unleashed an invasion of deadly machines possessed by corrupted magic, shattering the prosperous peace of autumn. Animals have survived disease, starvation, and infighting but they've never faced an enemy like this. As this horrific mechanized army poured out of the smoldering remains of the

secret bunker, the Council Guard bravely fought to contain their reach, but the guards' formations were no match for the machines' overwhelming firepower. This first battle quickly became a bloody disaster, leaving countless animals dead and wounded. Now, the machines are rampaging across the Commonwood, intent on exploiting the warmth of the world and enclosing every habitat, town, and village in their path.

Still, there are whispers of hope. Across the marshes, plains, mountains, and forests, scrappy crews of animals are rising up to resist the machine occupation, fighting back with guerrilla tactics and clandestine sabotage, healing the wounded, and doing the hard work of rewilding and reconstructing areas decimated by the war. Calling themselves Defenders of the Wild, these partisans hail from all four animal factions, each determined to fight back in their own way: *the Order* with its wisdom of the flame, *the Council* with its fortitude and bread, *the Sect* with its ingenious inventions, and *the Coven* with its spells and subterfuge.

Can the defenders band together to heal the land and outsmart a seemingly impossible enemy? Or will the Commonwood succumb to an endless industrial winter? It's up to you and your comrades to decide.



EVERYTHING IS
CONNECTED
NOTHING LASTS
FOREVER

DEFENDERS of the WILD



Animal Factions

of the

COMMONWOOD



THE ORDER

An ancient fellowship of scholars, firekeepers, mapmakers, and librarians, the Order works to cultivate the wisdom of the Wild throughout its candlelit monasteries and ornate academies nestled in the forests. The official recordkeepers of the animal world (at least, according to them), they practice the art of flame divination to peer into the past and forecast the future. Honoring tradition, they perform the rituals that keep the Wildfire burning—and transform it into a deadly weapon when necessary.



Home habitat ~ Forests



THE COVEN

The bearers of songs, spells, and subterfuge, the Coven is an ever-shifting alliance of witches, herbalists, bards, and bandits who have practiced the healing magic of the Wild for countless generations. Based in the ungovernable marshes (where rogues and rebels thrive), they are masters of the ambush, adept at transforming botanicals into everything from poultice to poison, and always ready with a hex to stall an enemy or a tune to lift an ally's weary spirit.



Home habitat ~ Marshes



THE COUNCIL

Confident the way to construct a better, more sustainable future is to build it together, the Council is a powerful federation of civil servants, guards, farmers, and bakers who have established their extensive agricultural communes on the plains. Driven by fairness, solidarity, and structure (and fueled by plenty of ale and bread), they were among the first to face down the machines. Now, they aim to protect and feed their fellow animals while rebuilding the areas decimated by war.



Home habitat ~ Plains



THE SECT

Eager to experiment with and embrace new technology, the Sect is a shadowy society of machinists, miners, mathematicians, and hackers who work in remote laboratories deep in the mountains. Known for their superstitious lore, labyrinthine crystal mines, and ingenious inventions (not to mention their potent stimulants and all-night underground festivals), they are now conspiring to craft the controversial gadgets and weaponry they deem necessary in the fight for animal survival.



Home habitat ~ Mountains

Gameplay Overview



PLAYERS
1-4



AGES
14+



TIME
1-2 Hours
30 min per player

In *Defenders of the Wild*, players are organizers of the animal resistance who have converged on a dangerous flashpoint in the war against the machines. Construction has begun on a new machine core and sprawling factory complex where an animal village once stood. Engines are building walls that enclose habitat after habitat while mechs guard expanding factories and toxic pollution spreads.

Organizers must cooperate with each other despite longstanding factional disagreements and help their network of fellow defenders take actions in the right locations and at the right times in order to win this crucial battle. Clear pollution, fight mechs, breach walls, build camps, and rewild factories before the machines complete construction of the core and conquer this region of the Commonwood.

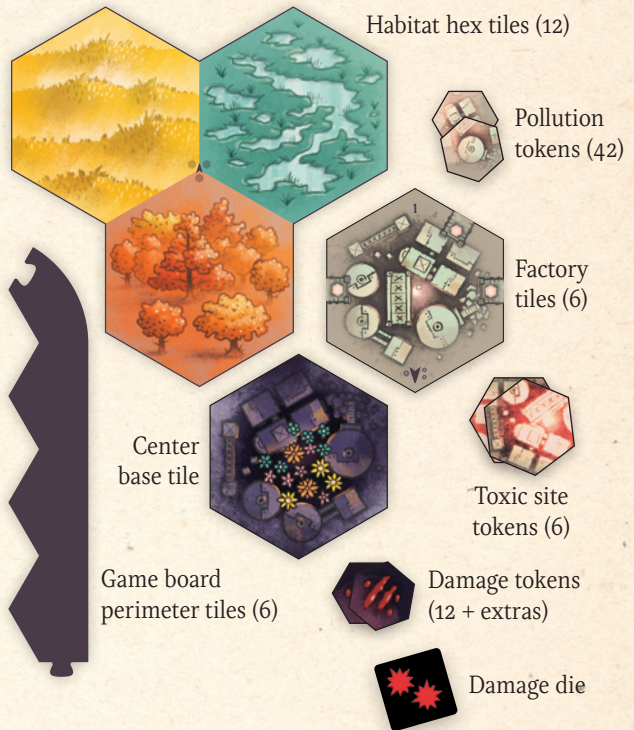
Winning the Game ~ *Defenders of the Wild* is a fully cooperative game. All players win or lose together and must cooperate to destroy the machine core by completing 2 objectives together:

- All factories built by the machines must be rewilded.
- Each player must build all of their camps.

Losing the Game ~ There are 3 ways for all players to lose a game of *Defenders of the Wild*.

- If 5 factories have been built and the machines are ordered to build another, all players lose.
- If all 6 toxic sites have spread and the machines are ordered to spread more, all players lose.
- If 2 defenders from the same habitat are killed, all players lose.

COMPONENTS



CREDITS

Game Design ~ Henry Audubon & T.L. Simons

Illustration ~ Meg Lemieur & T.L. Simons

Narrative ~ Margaret Killjoy, Patricia Noonan, & T.L. Simons

Visual Design ~ T.L. Simons

Rulebook Editing ~ Herschel Pecker

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Rulebook contains sample images only. Actual components may vary.

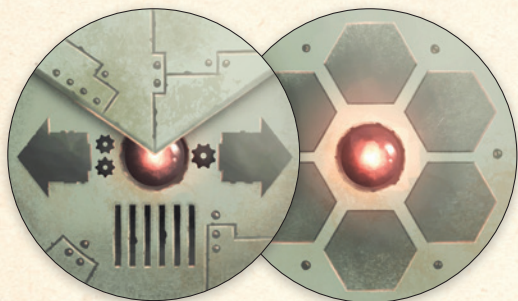
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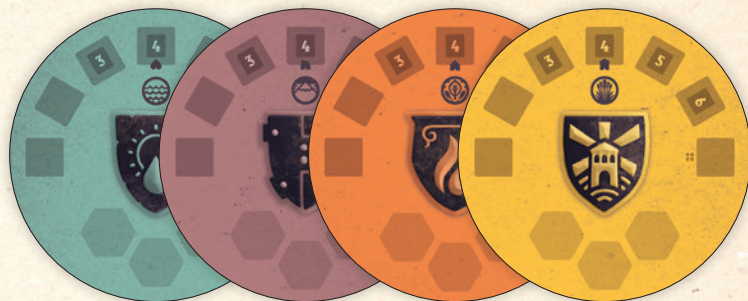
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COMPONENTS *continued*

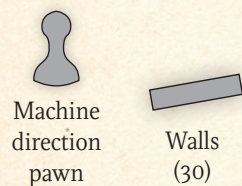


Direction circle

Toxic site circle



Faction circles (4, 1 per faction)



Machine
direction
pawn

Walls
(30)



Mechs
(20)



Engines
(2)



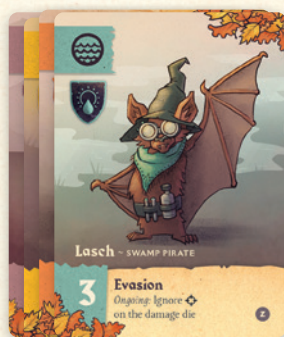
Support trackers
(4, 1 per faction)



Camps (24, 6 per faction)



Machine cards
(13, 7 base & 6 difficult)



Defender cards
(72, 18 per faction)



Organizer cards
(8, 2 per faction)



Order
organizers



Council
organizers



Coven
organizers



Sect
organizers



Death tokens
(4, 1 per habitat type)



Breach
markers (12)



First player
marker



Order item:
Maps (4)



Coven item:
Potions (4)



Sect item:
Rockets (4)



Council item:
Bread (4)

not pictured: Player aids (4, 1 per faction)

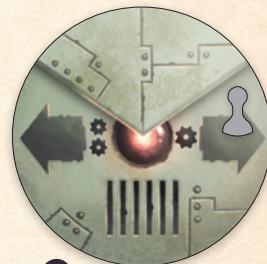
COMPONENTS *setup*



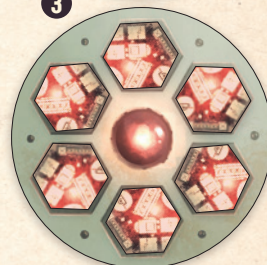
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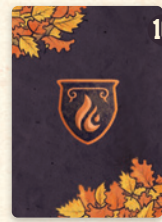
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8

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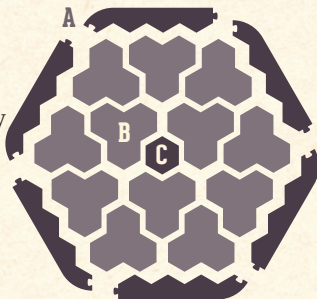


Setup

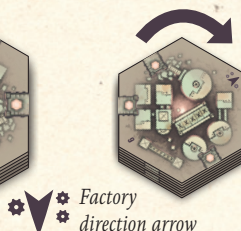
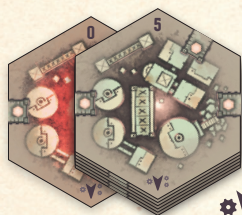
The setup steps below correspond with the numbers in circles in the components setup diagram on page 6.

1. Create the Game Board

(A) Connect all 6 perimeter tiles to create the 6 sided perimeter of the game board. (B) Randomly place the 12 habitat hex tiles inside the perimeter as shown to the right. Each habitat hex tile can be placed on either of its sides but make sure the ▲ arrows at the centers of all tiles point in the same direction. (C) Place the center base tile in the open spot at the center of the game board.



2. Create the Machine Core – Stack all of the factory tiles in numerical order with the tile numbered 0 on the bottom and the tile numbered 5 on top. Make sure the darker rewilded sides of the tiles are face down. Shuffle the orientations of the stacked factory tiles so that the factory direction arrows all point in random directions. Don't shuffle the numerical order in which they are stacked. Place the stacked tiles on the center base tile to create the machine core.



Shuffle the orientations of the stacked factory tiles.

Factory direction arrow

3. Set up the Machine Circles – Place the direction circle and the toxic site circle to one side of the game board. Place all 6 toxic site tokens on the toxic site circle. Set the machine direction to 'right' by placing the machine direction pawn on the right-hand direction space on the direction circle marked by the 1 ⚙ icon.

4. Deploy Engines & Walls – (A) Place 1 wall on the hex edge that the machine core's factory direction arrow points toward. (B) Place a second wall on the next edge to the right of the first wall. (C) Place an engine on the following edge to the right of the second wall. (D) Place 2 additional walls and the other engine on the hex edges off the opposite side of the machine core next to the top factory tile's number 5 and mirroring steps A, B, and C. Make sure the engines are upright, with their jagged fronts facing away from the walls at their backs. Place all other walls in a pile within reach of all players.



5. Deploy Mechs – Place 2 mechs in the machine core. Place 1 mech in each habitat hex adjacent to a 🏠 icon on the perimeter. Place all other mechs in a pile within reach of all players.

6. Spread Pollution

Place 1 pollution token in each habitat hex with a 🌳 icon. Place all other pollution tokens in a pile within reach of all players.



7. Choose Factions – Assign each player 1 of the 4 factions. Pass out the corresponding faction circle, organizers, organizer cards, camps, support tracker, defender cards, player aid, and 3 damage tokens to each player. Place all components corresponding with unplayed factions back in the box.

SETUP *continued*

8. Set up Your Faction Circle & Camps

Each player: Place your faction circle directly in front of you and set 1 of your camps to the side as your starting camp. The support track is the numbered track that runs around the top half of your faction circle.

- **4 players:** Use the side with 4 small dots next to the final space on the support track. Place 1 camp on the '4' space of the support track and place 1 additional camp in each space to the right. You should now have 4 camps on your support track. Place the remaining camp back in the box.
- **3 players:** Use the side with 3 small dots next to the '6' space on the support track. Place 1 camp on the '4' space of the support track and place 1 additional camp in each space to the right except for the final space next to the 2 dots. You should now have 4 camps on your support track. Place the remaining camp back in the box.
- **2 players:** Use the side with 2 small dots next to the final space on the support track. Place 1 camp on the '4' space of the support track and place 1 additional camp in each space to the right. You should now have 5 camps on your support track.
- **1 player:** Follow the setup steps for 2 players and read the 1 player mode section on page 23.

Each player: Place your support tracker on the first space of the support track on the left side of your faction circle.

9. Choose Organizers ~ *Each player:* Review your faction's organizer cards and select 1 to play as. Place your chosen organizer to the side with your starting camp. Assemble the 12 defender cards listed on your organizer card and then tuck the card under the top of your faction circle with the organizer portrait revealed. Place the other organizer, its card, and the remaining defender cards back in the box.

10. Set up Your Defenders Deck ~ *Each player:* Shuffle your 12 defender cards and place them face-down to the left of your faction circle. Make room for an exhaustion pile to the right of your faction circle. Draw 3 defender cards from

SETUP *continued*

your defenders deck into your hand and do not reveal them to the other players.

11. Distribute Breach Markers ~ Distribute the 12 breach markers evenly among the players.

• **2 players:** 6 each • **3 players:** 4 each • **4 players:** 3 each

12. Distribute Items ~ *Each player:* Take 1 item token corresponding to each of the factions in play. Place each of your item tokens next to your faction circle with the darker side face-up.

13. Set up Death Tokens ~ Place all 4 death tokens in a row near the game board.

14. Set up the Machine Deck & Adjust Difficulty

For your first games, play with the base machine deck of 7 cards and place the 6 cards marked 'difficult' back in the game box. To increase the game's difficulty, randomly draw between 1 and 6 difficult machine cards:

- **Intermediate:** 1-2 cards
- **Expert:** 3-4 cards
- **Extreme:** 5-6 cards

Substitute each drawn difficult card for a corresponding base card with the same name to compose a deck of 7 cards. Place all remaining base and difficult cards back in the box.

Shuffle the deck of 7 machine cards and place it face-down within reach of all players. Make room for a discard pile.

15. Choose Starting Camp Locations ~ *Each player:* Choose one of your faction's home habitat hexes next to the perimeter of the game board as the location for the starting camp you set aside in step 9. Place the camp in that hex along with your organizer.

- If none of your faction's home habitat hexes are next to the perimeter, choose one of your home habitat hexes that is 1 hex away from the perimeter.

16. Randomly Assign First Player ~ Give that player the first player marker.

Round Phases

Defenders of the Wild is played in rounds. Each round consists of an 'organize' phase followed by an 'action' phase. Each phase has 2 steps.

Phase 1: Organize ~ All players resolve steps A & B together

A ~ All players choose an active defender from their hand in silence

B ~ All players reveal their active defenders and open discussion

Phase 2: Action ~ Repeat steps A & B for each player's turn

A ~ Take actions with your active defender

B ~ Draw and resolve 1 machine card

After all players have completed the action phase, start the organize phase of the next round

ORGANIZE

A ~ At the start of each round, all players must cease communication and maintain silence while choosing a defender card from their hand to play. Once you have chosen your active defender for the round, place that card face down on top of your exhaustion pile to the right of your faction circle.

- If you have no defender cards in your hand, place the top card from your defenders deck face down on your exhaustion pile as your active defender.

B ~ When all players have completed organize step A and each player's active defender card is face down on their exhaustion pile, all players simultaneously flip over their active defender to reveal the card to all other players. Players may now begin communicating, strategizing together, and sharing the specifics of their active defender with their fellow players. Some defender cards have special abilities marked 'reveal' and these effects must be resolved before proceeding.

- When a defender with a Comrade ability is revealed, the player with the first player marker passes the marker to the next player on their left. If multiple players reveal Comrade defenders simultaneously, pass the first player marker to the left once per revealed Comrade.



ACTION

The player with the first player marker takes the first turn of the round. During each turn, a player takes actions with their active defender and then draws and resolves 1 machine card.

A ~ When it's your turn to be the active player, you may take as many actions as the number of action points noted in the lower left of your active defender card. Every defender can complete any of the actions listed on the player aid and detailed starting on page 13. Some defender cards have special abilities marked 'ongoing' that may affect your turn as well as other players' turns. After spending all of your active defender's action points, you may team up additional defenders in your hand from the same habitat as your active defender in order to take additional actions (see page 11).

B ~ After taking actions, draw and resolve 1 machine card. Each type of machine card deploys, moves, and manages a specific set of machine components.

Turn order rotates clockwise around the table. After each player's turn, the player to their left becomes the active player and repeats the action phase. Once all players have taken their turns, all active defenders become exhausted. Start a new round with the organize phase. Players must once again cease communication and choose an active defender to play for the next round in silence.



Restrictions on Communication

There are 2 ways players must restrict communication with each other while playing *Defenders of the Wild*:

- At the start of the organize phase, you are prohibited from communicating with other players and must choose your active defender in silence. Communication and discussion may commence once all players reveal their active defender simultaneously.
- At all times during the game, players may not reveal their hand of defender cards to other players and may not speak or communicate about any of the specifics on the defender cards in their hands, other than noting the defenders' habitats (see page 11). After all players have revealed their active defenders, you may freely communicate and strategize with other players by saying things like "I have a way to help with that next turn" or "I don't currently have any forest defenders" as long as you never directly mention any other features on the defender cards in your hand. Once your active defender has been revealed and is face up on your exhaustion pile, all players can freely view and speak about it.

The Game Board

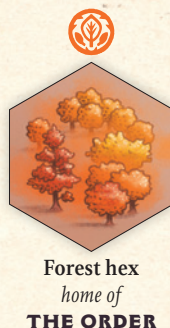
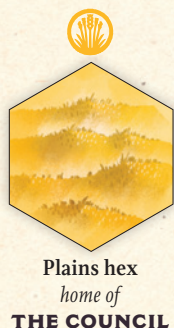
The game board starts off with 36 habitat hex spaces that surround the machine core hex. Each hex has 6 edges they share with adjacent hexes or the game board perimeter.

There are 4 types of habitat hexes: forests, plains, marshes, and mountains. Each of the 4 animal factions has a home habitat type where that faction can build its camps: the Council prefers the plains, the Sect prefers the mountains, the Coven prefers the marshes, and the Order prefers the forests. Half the defender cards in a player's deck are from their faction's home habitat.

Over the course of the game, players will resolve cards from the machine deck that will order engines to advance and build walls around the edges of habitat hexes. There is no way for players to stop the advance of engines and the building of walls. When a habitat hex becomes fully enclosed on all 6 edges, it is in danger of becoming a factory hex.

Factory tiles start the game stacked in the machine core hex and are built on enclosed habitat hexes when a 'factories' machine card is resolved (see page 19). Players cannot enter the machine core hex. The only way to destroy the machine core and win the game is to rewild all of the factories that the machines build while also building all of your camps.

When players rewild a factory (see page 16), it becomes a wild hex that counts as every faction's home habitat and every defender's habitat.



Defenders Deck

When it's your turn as the active player, you will take actions on the game board with your organizer using your active defender's action points and abilities.



DEFENDER CARDS OVERVIEW

A. Organizer Initial

When building your organizer's defenders deck, look for the organizer's initial in the lower-right corner of your faction's defender cards. Assemble those 6 defenders along with your faction's 6 base defenders that have no initial in order to create your defenders deck of 12 cards.

B. Action Points ~ On your turn, spend the action points noted on the bottom left of your active defender's card to take actions. To take any action from the action menu (see page 13) you must spend 1 action point. All defenders may take any action from the action menu. You may only take actions in hexes where your organizer is, unless a defender's special ability notes otherwise.

C. Special Ability ~ Each defender also details their special ability along the bottom of the card. Learn more about resolving special abilities and the range of abilities on page 24.

D. Habitat ~ Each defender has a habitat noted in the upper left corner of the card. Half the defenders in a player's deck are from their faction's home habitat. The other half of the defenders in the deck are from other habitats. Connected habitat hex corridors that are all of the same type as your active defender allow you to move faster (see page 13-14).

TEAMING UP

Once you have spent all of your active defender's action points, you may choose to 'team up' additional defenders from your hand to take additional actions. Teamed up defenders must be from the same habitat as your active de-

DEFENDER CARDS OVERVIEW *continued*

fender. Each teamed up defender gives you 1 additional action point to spend. Special abilities and action points noted on teamed up defender cards are all ignored.

Team up 1 defender at a time, spending the additional action point before teaming up any more defenders. Place teamed up defenders under your active defender in the exhaustion pile.



Teaming up example: Pawpel is from the same habitat as the Order player's active defender Flik. After spending all 3 of Flik's action points, the player teams up Pawpel giving the player 1 additional action point to spend.

RESHUFFLING THE DECK

If there are no remaining cards in your defenders deck, shuffle all the cards in your exhaustion pile other than your active defender and any teamed up defenders. Place the shuffled cards face down to the left of your faction circle to start a new defenders deck.

Support & Camps

To win the game, all players must build all their camps while rewilding all of the factories built by the machines. In addition to being a requirement for winning, building camps is how you draw cards from your defenders deck into your hand. Each camp also gives you an additional location for regrouping (see page 15) and gaining an item (see page 16).

To build camps, you need support from the animal inhabitants of the Commonwood. Your level of support is represented on the support track that runs around the top half of your faction circle. The support track is where you place your camps at the start of the game.

Gaining Support ~ Gain 1 support each time you destroy a mech, breach a wall, clear a hex of pollution, or rewild a factory (see pages 15-16). For each support gained, move your support tracker forward 1 step on the support track. You have maxed out your support when the next step on the support track is blocked by a camp. When your support is maxed out, you cannot gain additional support until you have built your next camp and reset the support meter (see below). You may still take any of the actions that generate support when your support track is maxed out, but you will not gain additional support. When you build a camp, your support tracker resets to its starting position on the track.



Support example: (A) The Order player has taken 2 actions that gain support and has moved their support tracker forward 2 steps on the support track to mark the gained support. (B) The support track is now maxed out and the player may now take a build action to build their next camp that is blocking the next step on the support track.

Building Camps & Drawing Defenders

After building a camp and resetting your support tracker, draw cards from your defenders deck until your hand size reaches the newly-revealed number on the support track.

Endgame: Your Final Camp ~ When you build your final camp, you have completed your faction's objectives and you exit the game. Leave your support tracker in the final step of the support track and place your organizer in the center of your faction circle. You may continue strategizing with other players until the game ends. But you will no longer participate in any additional rounds of gameplay.

- The last player to build their final camp cannot exit the game if any factories built by the machines have not been rewilded. Continue playing until all factories are rewilded.
- Make sure to draw and resolve 1 machine card after building your final camp if the game has not ended.

Damage & Death

Taking actions near mechs is the most common reason for taking damage. You also take damage every time you clear a toxic site. Whenever you take damage, place the specified number of damage tokens on your faction circle below your faction shield.

Mechs ~ Mechs are the machines' deadly attack units.

A mech in a factory hex is a sniper. A mech in a habitat hex is a hunter.



Sniper mech
in a factory hex



Hunter mech
in a habitat hex

Rolling Damage ~ When you take an action with your organizer starting in the same hex as a mech or adjacent to a factory with a sniper, you must roll the damage die once to determine if you take damage. Only roll damage once per action taken, regardless of how many mechs are currently threatening to inflict damage on you. The damage die has faces that can inflict 1 damage, 2 damage, or no damage.



1 damage





2 damage




No damage



Damage token

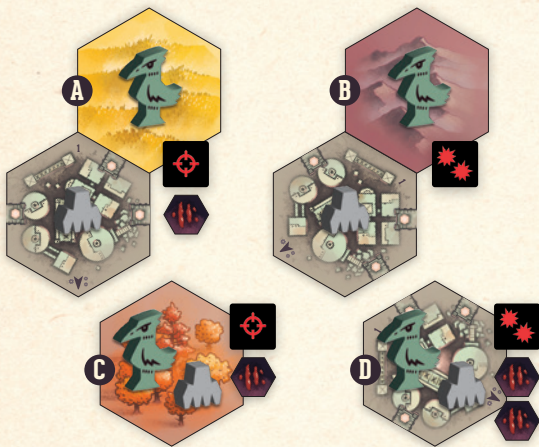
Melee Damage Rolls ~ Both  and  on the damage die inflict damage on you when taking an action with your organizer starting in the same hex as 1 or more mechs.

Sniper Damage Rolls ~ Only  on the damage die inflict damage on you when taking an action with your organizer starting in a hex free of mechs but adjacent to snipers. If you are rolling damage when taking an action starting in the same hex as 1 or more mechs and adjacent to 1 or more snipers, roll for melee damage.

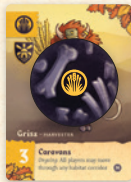
Toxic Sites ~ Take 1 damage each time you clear a toxic site. Toxic sites can be cleared by taking a 'clear pollution' action (see page 15), using a potion (see page 17), or using a defender's special ability (see page 24).



DAMAGE & DEATH *continued*



Examples of rolling damage: A) The Coven player rolls 1 damage when taking an action adjacent to a sniper and places 1 damage token on their faction circle. B) The player rolls 2 damage when taking an action adjacent to a sniper and no damage is inflicted. C) The player rolls 1 damage when taking an action in a hex with a mech and places 1 damage token on their faction circle. D) The player rolls 2 damage when taking an action in a factory with a mech and places 2 damage tokens on their faction circle.



Defender Death – The maximum amount of damage you can sustain without losing a defender is 3 damage tokens. If you take damage and it results in exceeding this maximum of 3 damage tokens, another player must randomly choose a defender from your hand.

This defender is killed and is placed face up under the death token corresponding to that defender's habitat. Whenever one of your defenders is killed, clear all damage from your faction circle.

- If a damage roll inflicts damage that results in exceeding this maximum of 3 damage tokens and you don't have any defenders in your hand, the top card from your defenders deck is drawn and killed.
- If 2 defenders from the same habitat are killed, the game ends and all players lose.

Action Menu

ACTION: **MOVE**

A move action allows you to reposition your organizer to an adjacent and unobstructed hex or through multiple hexes in a habitat corridor that are all the same type as your active defender's habitat. Ending a move action in a hex with a camp also enables you to gain items (see page 16). Any number of organizers can be in the same hex.

Obstructions to Movement:

- Walls obstruct move actions to adjacent hexes. You cannot move through walls unless those walls have been breached (see page 15).
- Factories and rewilded factories have walls on all 6 of their edges and you may not move through those factory walls unless they have been breached.
- You cannot move through engines.
- You cannot enter the machine core.
- You cannot move off the perimeter of the board.

Moving to an Adjacent Hex – To take a move action, spend 1 action point and reposition your organizer to any adjacent and unobstructed hex.



Move example: The Order player takes 1 move action to reposition their organizer to an adjacent and unobstructed hex.

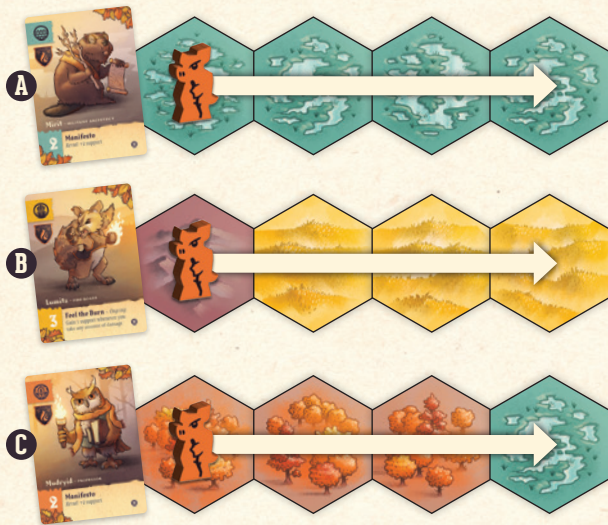
Moving Through a Habitat Corridor – A habitat corridor is any connected set of hexes that are all of the same habitat type. You may take 1 move action to move through multiple unobstructed hexes in a connected corridor if those hexes are all the same type as the habitat of your active defender. When taking a move action using a habitat corridor, your organizer must start and/or end the action in the corridor.

- When taking a move action starting inside a habitat corridor that's the same as your active defender's habitat, you may reposition your organizer to any hex inside or

ACTION: **MOVE** *continued*

adjacent to the corridor as long as the path of movement is unobstructed.

- When taking a move action starting in a hex adjacent to a corridor that's the same as your active defender's habitat, you may reposition your organizer to any connected hex that makes up the corridor as long as the path of movement is unobstructed.
- Players may move through rewilded factories as part of a connected habitat corridor as long as the walls along the path of movement have been breached.
- You may not pass through hexes with mechs as part of a move action through a habitat corridor.



Examples of moving through habitat corridors: (A) The Order player takes 1 move action with an active marsh defender to reposition their organizer within a corridor of marsh hexes. (B) The player takes 1 move action with an active plains defender to reposition their organizer into an adjacent corridor of plains hexes. (C) The player takes 1 move action with an active forest defender to reposition their organizer to a hex adjacent to a corridor of forests hexes.

ACTION: **BUILD A CAMP**

Building all of your camps is a requirement for winning the game and is how you draw more defender cards into your hand. Each camp also gives you an additional location for regrouping and healing (see page 15) as well as for gaining an item (see page 16).

To take a build a camp action, spend 1 action point, pick up the camp occupying the next step on your maxed out support track, and place it in the hex where your organizer is. Reset your support tracker to the starting position on the track. Draw cards from your defenders deck until your hand size reaches the newly-revealed number on the support track.

- Only 1 camp can be in each hex.
- You may only build camps in your faction's home habitat hexes or in rewilded factory hexes.
- When you build your final camp, you exit the game. Move your support tracker to the final step of the support track and place your organizer in the center of your faction circle.



Build a camp example: (A) The Order player has maxed out their support track. (B) Their organizer is in a forest hex, which is the Order's home habitat. (C) The player takes 1 build a camp action to build their next camp revealing a 6 on the support track's next step. (D) The player draws their hand up to 6 defender cards. (E) The support tracker resets to its starting position.

ACTION: REGROUP

Regrouping allows you to reposition your organizer to any of your camps, anywhere on the board. To take a regroup action, spend 1 action point and reposition your organizer to any hex where one of your camps is built. Unlike move actions, regroup actions are not restricted by distance or obstructions and do not allow you to gain an item.



Regroup example: The Order player takes 1 regroup action to reposition their organizer to another hex where they have a camp.

ACTION: CLEAR POLLUTION +1 support

Clearing pollution allows you to clear all pollution tokens or a toxic site token from a hex and is one way to gain support. To take a clear pollution action, spend 1 action point and remove all pollution tokens or the toxic site token from the hex where your organizer is. Clearing a toxic site inflicts 1 damage on the player taking the action.

Place cleared pollution tokens back in the pollution token pile and cleared toxic site tokens back on the toxic site circle. Move your support tracker forward 1 step on the support track unless the track is already maxed out.



Clear pollution examples:

- A) The Council player takes 1 clear action to remove 2 pollution tokens from a hex.
- B) The player takes 1 clear action to remove 1 toxic site token from a hex. The toxic site inflicts 1 damage on the player.

ACTION: HEAL

Healing allows you to remove all damage from your faction circle, minimizing the risk of your defenders being killed. To take a heal action, your organizer must be in a hex with a camp of any faction. Spend 1 action point and remove all damage tokens from your faction circle.

- If taking a heal action requires rolling damage, remove all damage tokens before rolling.



Heal example: The Sect player's organizer is in a hex with a camp. The player takes 1 heal action to clear 2 damage tokens from their faction circle.

ACTION: DESTROY A MECH +1 support

Destroying a mech allows you to remove a mech from the game board and is one way to gain support. To take a destroy a mech action, spend 1 action point and remove 1 mech from the hex where your organizer is. Place destroyed mechs back in the mech pile. Move your support tracker forward 1 step on the support track unless the track is already maxed out.



Destroy example: The Sect player takes 1 destroy action to remove 1 mech from a hex.

ACTION: BREACH A WALL +1 support

Breaching a wall or a factory wall allows you and other players to move through the breached wall and is one way to gain support. To take a breach a wall action, spend 1 action point and place a breach marker next to a wall along an edge of the hex where your organizer is. Move your support tracker forward 1 step on the support track unless the track is already maxed out. If you have already placed all of your breach markers on the game board, you cannot take another breach action.

ACTION: **BREACH A WALL** *continued*

Breach markers stay on the game board in their placed position when a factory is built and the breached wall is replaced with a factory tile (see page 19) as well as when a factory is rewilded.



Breach a wall examples:

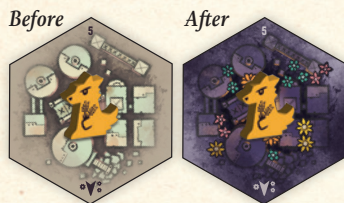
(A) The Council player takes 1 breach action to place a breach marker next to a factory. (B) The player takes 1 breach action to place a breach marker next to a wall.

ACTION: **REWILD A FACTORY** +1 support

Rewilding a factory allows you to flip a factory tile to its rewilded side and is one way to gain support. To win the game, players must rewild all factories built by the machines. Rewilded factories do not spread pollution but continue to have walls on all 6 of their edges. Any faction may build a camp in a rewilded factory. Players may move through rewilded factories as part of a connected habitat corridor if the walls along the path of movement have been breached.

In order to rewild a factory, all pollution and mechs in that factory must first be cleared and destroyed. To take a rewild a factory action, spend 1 action point and flip the factory tile where your organizer is to its rewilded side. Make sure to place the rewilded factory with the factory direction arrow pointing in the same direction. Move your support tracker forward 1 step on the support track unless the track is already maxed out.

- Players cannot enter or rewild the machine core.



Rewild example:

After clearing the factory of mechs and pollution, the Council player takes 1 rewild action to flip the factory tile to its rewilded side making sure the orientation of the factory direction arrow is unchanged.

Items

GAINING & USING ITEMS

Gaining – Each faction offers a unique item (see page 17) players can gain when moving to any of that faction's camps. At the start of a game, your item tokens must be placed next to your faction circle with their darkened *used* sides face up. To gain a faction's item, end a move action with your organizer in the same hex as one of that faction's camps. When you gain an item, flip your corresponding item token to its colorful *gained* side to mark that you have obtained it.

- If your organizer is already in a hex with a camp, you may spend 1 action point to gain the item offered by the faction's camp.
- Ending a regroup action in a hex with a camp does not gain an item.



Gaining an item example:

The Order player takes a move action to reposition their organizer to a hex with a camp built by the Council. The player gains bread and flips their bread item token to its *gained* side.

Using – You may use an item you have gained at any time during your turn before drawing your turn's machine card. Using an item does not require spending an action point. When you use an item and resolve its effect, flip the item token over so its darkened *used* side is once again face up.



Gained item

Used item

ITEMS *continued*



COUNCIL ITEM: **BREAD**

Using bread gives you 1 additional action point to spend on any action.



COVEN ITEM: **POTIONS**

Using potions allows you to remove 1 damage token from your faction circle or clear pollution without spending an action point. Do not roll damage when using potions.



SECT ITEM: **ROCKETS**

Using rockets allows you to destroy a mech or breach a wall without spending an action point. Do not roll damage when using rockets.



ORDER ITEM: **MAPS**

Using maps allows you to move or regroup without spending an action point. Do not roll damage when using maps.

Machine Cards

After taking all actions on your turn, draw and resolve 1 machine card to complete your turn. After drawing and resolving a machine card, place it face up in the discard pile. Once all 7 machine cards have been drawn and resolved, reshuffle the discard pile and place it face down to start a new machine deck.



- Always ensure that you resolve a machine card in the correct sequence, one step at a time.

Engines Machine Cards

Engines cards order engines to advance along the edges of habitat hexes, and build walls.

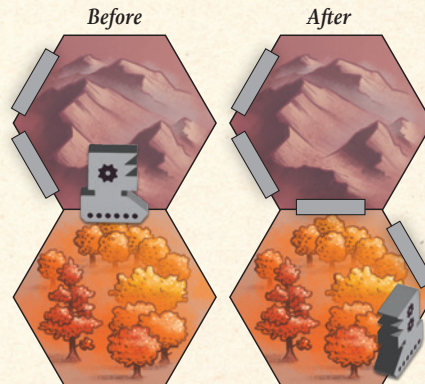
ENGINES STEP 1: **Engines advance twice**

Engines sit on habitat hex edges with one hex to their right side (marked on the engine's right side with the ⚙ icon) and one hex to their left (marked with the ⚙ icon). They have a jagged forward-facing front and a flat back. Engines always advance forward and never in reverse.

ENGINES STEP 1 *continued*



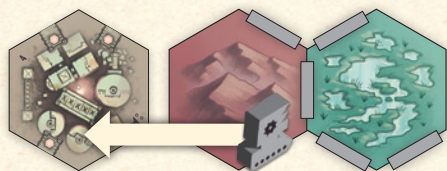
Check the machine direction to determine whether each engine will advance around the hex to its right ⚙ or to its left ⚙. For each advance, move the engine 1 hex edge forward in the specified direction and build 1 wall behind the engine on the edge it moved from. Advance each engine simultaneously, one edge at a time, twice per engines card.



Engine advance example: The machine direction is set to the right ⚙. The engine advances twice around the hex to its right building 1 wall on each edge it moved past.

ENGINES STEP 1 *continued*

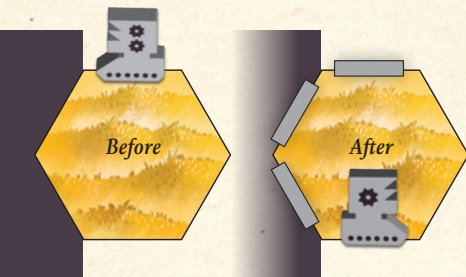
Dead Ends & Resetting – If an engine is ever ordered to advance into an edge that has a wall, a factory, or another engine, it resets. Pick up the engine and place it on the machine core. Make sure to build 1 wall on the hex edge where the engine reset from.



Engine reset example:

An engine is ordered to advance into an edge that already has a wall and resets to the machine core leaving 1 wall behind.

Advancing Along the Perimeter – Engines never stop on a hex edge along the perimeter of the game board. Engines ordered to advance along the perimeter continue advancing and building walls around all perimeter edges of the specified habitat hex until stopping on the next edge that is not alongside the perimeter. Advancing around any number of perimeter edges counts as only 1 of the engine's 2 advances per engines card.



Advancing along the perimeter example:

An engine is ordered to advance around the hex to its left ⚙️ alongside the game board perimeter. The engine continues advancing and builds walls on all perimeter edges before stopping on the next edge that is not alongside the perimeter. This is only 1 of its 2 advances.



ENGINES STEP 2: Deploy reset engines from the highest numbered factory

The second step on engine cards deploys engines that reset to the machine core in the previous step. Reset engines always attempt to deploy to 1 of the 6 hex edges that radiate like spokes off the highest numbered factory or rewilded factory tile. To determine which edge a reset engine will deploy to, find the factory direction arrow on the highest numbered factory or rewilded factory. If the edge the arrow points to is clear, deploy the engine to that edge. If that edge is already blocked by a wall, a factory wall, or the other engine, search for the next clear edge radiating off that tile by rotating around the tile depending on the machine direction.

If all 6 of the edges radiating from the highest numbered factory or rewilded factory tile are already blocked, move to the next highest numbered tile and repeat the same steps as above to determine which edge radiating off that tile the engine should deploy to.

- If the machines have not built any factories, the top factory on the machine core is the highest numbered factory.
- Always deploy engines with their back to the factory and their front facing out.
- If both engines have reset to the machine core, deploy each engine one at a time.



Engine deploy example (above): (A) A reset engine is sitting in the machine core. (B) The machine direction is set to the left ⚙️. (C) The factory direction arrow on the highest numbered factory is pointing to an edge where a wall has already been built. (D) So the engine deploys to the next unobstructed edge radiating from that factory to the left ⚙️ of the direction arrow.

Factories Machine Cards

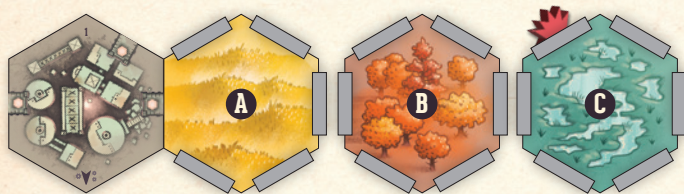
Factory cards build factory tiles on enclosed habitat hexes *or* spread pollution tokens from factories.

FACTORIES STEP 1:

If any habitat hexes are enclosed, build 1 factory

Check to see if any habitat hexes are enclosed. Enclosed habitat hexes have walls enclosing all 6 of their edges. Factories and rewilded factories have walls on all 6 of their edges and count towards the enclosure of adjacent habitat hexes. If no habitat hexes are enclosed, skip to step 2.

- Breached walls and rewilded factory walls still count towards the enclosure of adjacent habitat hexes.
- Engines do not count towards the enclosure of adjacent habitat hexes.



Examples of enclosed habitat hexes: (A) Walls are built on 5 edges of the hex and a factory is positioned on the 6th edge. (B) Walls are built on all 6 edges of a hex. (C) Walls are built on all 6 edges of a hex including the breached wall which still counts towards the enclosure.

Building a Factory – Remove all walls on the enclosed hex's edges. Pick up the factory tile on top of the machine core along with any toxic site token, pollution tokens, and mechs already on the tile and relocate it to the target habitat hex. Make sure to place the factory tile on the target hex with the factory direction arrow in the same direction as it pointed on the machine core.

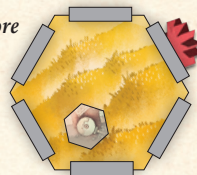
Deploy 2 Snipers to the Machine Core

After building a new factory, deploy 2 snipers to the revealed factory on the machine core.



FACTORIES STEP 1 *continued*

Before



After



Building a factory example: A plains hex is the only enclosed hex when a factories card is drawn. The walls around the hex are all removed and the top factory tile on the machine core is relocated to the plains hex along with the 2 snipers that were on the factory. The pollution token that was in the enclosed plains hex is placed on top of the newly built factory. The breach marker remains in place.

Building a Factory Contingencies

- If building a factory replaces a breached wall, the breach marker remains in place.
- If a factory is built on top of a hex with a camp, place the camp on top of the newly built factory. The camp cannot be used as a location for regrouping, healing, or gaining an item until the factory is rewilded.
- If a factory is built on top of a hex with organizers, place the organizers on top of the newly built factory.
- If a factory is built on top of a hex with pollution, place the pollution on top of the newly built factory. If the number of pollution tokens in the factory reaches 3 or higher, remove the tokens and replace them with a toxic site token. If a toxic site token is already on the factory, remove the pollution tokens.
- If a factory is built on top of a hex with hunters, place the mechs on top of the newly built factory. These mechs are now snipers.

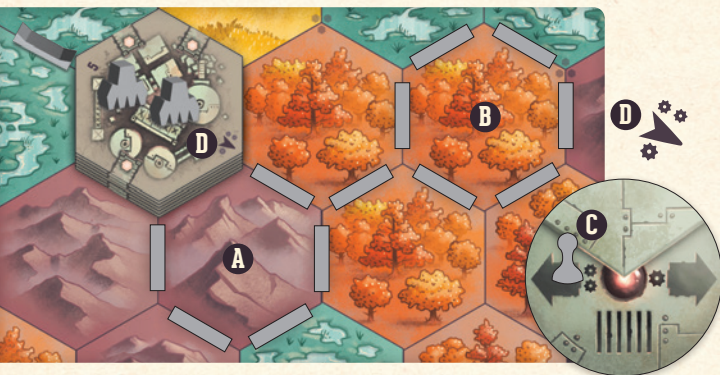
If Multiple Habitat Hexes are Enclosed

The machines only build 1 factory per factories card. To determine which enclosed hex to build the factory on top of, first check the machine direction. Then find the factory direction arrow pointing off the factory tile on top of the machine core. Following the direction of the arrow, scan in a straight line from the core to the board perimeter and then rotate the scan

FACTORIES STEP 1 *continued*

around the core in the specified machine direction until the scan hits an enclosed hex. Build the factory on that hex.

- If the scan encounters 2 enclosed hexes that are both along the same scan line, build the factory on the enclosed hex closer to the machine core.



Multiple enclosed hexes example (left): Both (A) and (B) hexes are enclosed when a factories card is drawn. (C) The machine direction is set to the left. (D) A scan line from the factory direction arrow on top of the machine core out to the board perimeter rotates to the left and hits enclosed hex (B) first. The factory is built on enclosed hex (B).



FACTORIES STEP 2: Factories spread pollution

If a factory was built in step 1, skip step 2. If not, proceed with spreading pollution. Locate the 3 pollution chutes on the top factory of the machine core and on each built factory. Spread 1 pollution token per pollution chute into the hex adjacent to each chute.



Toxic Sites ~ If 3 or more pollution tokens are ever spread to a single hex, the pollution becomes a toxic site. Remove all the pollution tokens and replace them with one of the toxic site tokens from the machine toxic circle.

FACTORIES STEP 2 *continued*

- Always spread pollution from the highest numbered factory first. Then repeat for the next highest numbered factory and so on until all factories have spread pollution.
- Pollution tokens skip over hexes that already have toxic site tokens and spread in the same direction to the next adjacent hex, passing through any walls or engines.
- If multiple pollution chutes are adjacent to the same hex, spread 1 pollution token to that hex for each adjacent chute.
- Pollution chutes spread pollution tokens into adjacent factory hexes and the machine core hex in the same way they spread pollution into all habitat hexes.
- Pollution tokens never spread off the perimeter of the game board.

Before



After



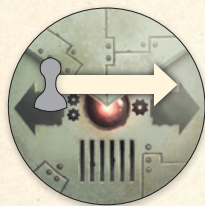
Factories spread pollution example: A factories card is drawn and pollution spreads to each hex adjacent to the factory's pollution chutes. (A) 1 pollution token spreads to a hex clear of pollution. (B) A pollution token is not added to the hex that already had 2 tokens. Both tokens are removed and replaced with a toxic site token. (C) A pollution token skips over the hex with a toxic site and spreads to the next adjacent hex in the same direction.

Reboot Machine Card

The reboot card is the same as a factories card but also toggles the machine direction.

REBOOT STEP 1: Toggle machine direction

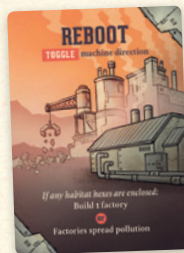
Toggle the machine direction by moving the machine direction pawn to the opposite direction space on the direction circle.



Toggle direction example: The reboot is drawn and the machine direction pawn is toggled from the left direction space with the 2 ⚙ icon to the right direction space with the 1 ⚙ icon.

REBOOT STEPS 2 & 3: If any habitat hexes are enclosed, build 1 factory or Factories spread pollution

After toggling the machine direction, proceed with the same 2 steps that are on factories cards (see pages 19-20).

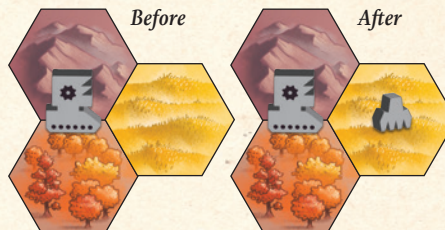


Mechs Machine Cards

Mechs cards deploy hunter mechs and trigger hunters to pursue players.

MECHS STEP 1: Each engine deploys 1 hunter

Locate the habitat hexes directly in front of each engine and deploy 1 hunter mech to each of those hexes. If an engine is facing the game board perimeter, a factory, or a rewilded factory, deploy the hunter mech to the habitat hex on the right or the left of the engine according to the machine direction.



Hunter deploy example: An engine deploys 1 hunter mech to the habitat hex directly in front of its position.

MECHS STEP 2: Hunters pursue the active player 2 habitat hexes & others 1

Hunters prioritize pursuing the active player and then attempt to pursue each of the other players, one at a time, going clockwise from the active player's left around the table. When a hunter pursues a player, it moves from its starting position to the habitat hex where the pursued player's organizer is. If a hunter is not in range of any players, it holds its position.

- Hunters never pursue through walls (including breached walls) and never pursue into factories or rewilded factories.
- Hunters that are already in a habitat hex with any player's organizer hold their position and do not pursue.

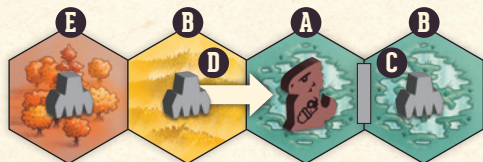
MECHS STEP 2 *continued*

Pursuing the Active Player – Hunters pursue the active player up to a range of 2 hexes. If any hunters are within 2 habitat hexes of the active player's organizer, reposition those mechs into the habitat hex where the organizer is.



Pursuing the active player example: (A) The Order player is the active player and draws a mechs card. (B) 2 hunters are within 2 habitat hexes of the player's organizer. Both pursue the player and reposition to the habitat hex where the organizer is. (C) A sniper does not pursue.

Pursuing Other Players – Hunters only pursue players other than the active player at a range of 1 hex. Going clockwise from the active player's left around the table, check if any hunters are within 1 habitat hex of a player's organizer and reposition those mechs into the habitat hex where the organizer is.



Pursuing other players example: (A) The Sect player is not the active player when a mechs card is drawn. (B) 2 hunters are within 1 habitat hex of the player's organizer. (C) 1 of those mechs is blocked by a wall. (D) The hunter that is not blocked pursues the player and repositions to the habitat hex where the organizer is. (E) A 3rd hunter is out of range of the organizer and holds its position.

Difficult Machine Cards

When setting up a new game, you can increase the difficulty of the game by randomly drawing between 1 and 6 machine cards marked 'difficult':

- **Intermediate:** 1-2 cards
- **Expert:** 3-4 cards
- **Extreme:** 5-6 cards

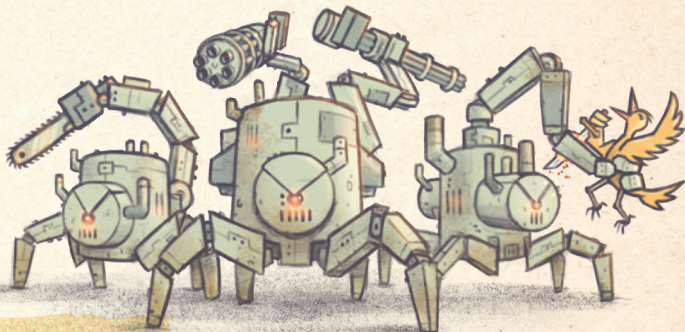
Substitute in each drawn difficult card for a corresponding base card with the same name to compose a deck of 7 cards. Place all remaining base and difficult cards back in the box.

DIFFICULT CARD DETAILS

Difficult Engines – Step 1 of difficult engines cards orders 1 engine to advance 3 times and step 2 orders the other engine to advance twice. To determine which engine advances 3 times, first check the machine direction. Then find the factory direction arrow pointing off the factory tile on top of the machine core. Following the direction of the arrow, scan in a straight line from the core to the board perimeter and then rotate the scan around the core in the specified machine direction until the scan hits an engine. Advance that engine 3 times and the other engine twice.

Difficult Factories – Pollution is always spread in step 2 of difficult factories cards regardless of whether a factory was built in step 1.

Difficult Mechs – A third step is added to all difficult mechs cards that requires all players with organizers in hexes with mechs to take 1 damage.



Endgame

WINNING

To destroy the machine core, claim victory in this crucial battle, and win the game, all players must build all their camps while rewilding all of the factories the machines have built. If at any time during a player's turn, all players have built all their camps and all factories built by the machines have been rewilded, the game ends and all players win. Remove the machine core from the board and place all organizers on the center base tile to celebrate together.

News of your victory spreads like sparks across the Commonwood, igniting the fires of hope and solidarity in its wake. Some defenders will stay in this region, utilizing the network of camps you have built to help start the long process of reconstruction and healing the land. Others will move on to lend their skills and expertise on the other fronts in the ongoing war against the machines.

Everything is connected! Nothing lasts forever!

LOSING

There are 3 ways for the game to end and all players lose:

Core Construction Complete ~ If 5 factory tiles have been built and a factories card or the reboot card orders the machines to build the final factory tile, all players lose.

Toxic Disaster ~ If all 6 toxic sites have spread to the game board and a factories card orders the machines to spread more toxic sites, the game ends and all players lose.

Massacre ~ If 2 defenders from the same habitat are killed, the game ends and all players lose.



1 Player Mode

Defenders of the Wild is primarily designed as a multiplayer game but can still be enjoyed alone with the following adjustments to the rules:

Play as 2 Factions with 1 Hand of Defenders

Follow 2 player setup rules with these changes:

- Your initial hand of 3 defender cards may be composed of any combination of defenders from either faction's defenders deck.
- Place the first player marker back in the game box.

Adjustments to Gameplay

Ignore all rules detailing restrictions on communication. Each turn, you may choose any defender from your hand as your active defender regardless of faction. Place the active defender on the exhaustion pile next to that defender's faction circle. Resolve the turn with the faction components matching the active defender's faction. Make sure to draw and resolve a machine card after taking each turn.

- If you have no defender cards from 1 of the factions in your hand, you may draw the top card from that faction's defenders deck as your active defender for the turn.
- When you choose a defender with a special ability marked 'reveal' as your active defender for the turn, the ability is resolved immediately.
- Special abilities marked 'ongoing' continue to affect gameplay for as long as the defender with the ability is on top of its exhaustion pile.
- A defender's special ability affects only its faction unless noted as affecting other players.
- You may only team up defenders from the same faction as your active defender.
- When taking an action to build a camp, draw cards from the defenders deck belonging to your active defender.
- If one of your factions takes damage resulting in exceeding the maximum of 3 damage tokens, shuffle your hand and randomly choose the defender that is killed.
- When you build a faction's final camp, place all of its defenders in your hand in the exhaustion pile. That faction exits the game. Continue playing as the other faction.

Defender Special Abilities

Reveal abilities are resolved during the organize phase and never require rolling damage. Gain 1 support per mech destroyed, wall breached, and hex cleared of pollution. Players may resolve multiple reveal abilities in any order.

Ongoing abilities modify actions during player turns. All rules pertaining to taking actions, including those for rolling damage and gaining support remain the same other than the modifications that the ongoing ability specifies.

- Resolving a special ability is always required.
- Special abilities affect only you unless noted otherwise.
- Ignore obstructions when resolving special abilities that reference adjacent hexes.



THE ORDER

- **Order Comrade** - *Reveal*: The first player marker passes to the left
- **Archives** - *Reveal*: Gain maps
- **Almanac Printing** - *Reveal*: All players gain maps
- **Controlled Blaze** - *Reveal*: Clear pollution in all adjacent hexes
- **Feel the Burn** - *Ongoing*: Gain 1 support whenever you take any amount of damage
- **Pyromancy** - *Reveal*: Take 1 damage
- **Manifesto** - *Reveal*: +2 support
- **Traveling Library** - *Reveal*: Relocate 1 of your built camps to any forest hex
- **Sanctuary** - *Ongoing*: Each player may regroup to any player's camp without rolling damage



THE COUNCIL

- **Council Comrade** - *Reveal*: The first player marker passes to the left
- **Field Kitchen** - *Reveal*: Gain bread
- **Break Bread** - *Reveal*: All players gain bread
- **Sustenance** - *Ongoing*: +1 support after any player builds a camp
- **Bountiful Harvest** - *Reveal*: Draw 2 defender cards
- **Caravans** - *Ongoing*: All players may move through any type of habitat corridor
- **Fortitude** - *Ongoing*: Ignore ★★ on the damage die
- **Sharpshooter** - *Reveal*: Destroy 1 mech in an adjacent hex
- **Field Hospital** - *Reveal*: All players remove 1 damage



THE COVEN

- **Coven Comrade** - *Reveal*: The first player marker passes to the left
- **Bubbling Brew** - *Reveal*: Gain potions
- **Apothecary** - *Reveal*: All players gain potions
- **Evasion** - *Ongoing*: Ignore ☞ on the damage die
- **Ambush** - *Reveal*: Destroy 1 mech in your location
- **Secret Paths** - *Reveal*: All players may relocate to a hex adjacent to their location
- **Friendly Fungi** - *Ongoing*: Moving to a hex clears pollution in that hex
- **Rain of Rust** - *Reveal*: Replace 1 mech with 1 pollution in any hex without a toxic site
- **Medicinal Herbs** - *Reveal*: Choose a player to remove all damage



THE SECT

- **Sect Comrade** - *Reveal*: The first player marker passes to the left
- **Arsenal** - *Reveal*: Gain rockets
- **Fireworks Festival** - *Reveal*: All players gain rockets
- **Hack Attack** - Do not draw a machine card this turn
- **Scrap Hunter** - *Ongoing*: Gain 1 additional support whenever you destroy a mech
- **Power Down** - *Ongoing*: All players may move through walls
- **Tunnels** - *Reveal*: Relocate to any mountain hex
- **Ballistics** - *Ongoing*: You may use rockets to destroy a mech in an adjacent hex
- **Demolitions** - *Reveal*: Breach any wall