

# WEEK 4 – TEAM PROJECT

## *Small Level Design Document for “Swamped” Level*

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## Theme

The theme for *Swamped* is one of being hunted and being in constant danger. While the setting is a somewhat confined swampland filled with shallow waters; it's dark, foggy, and if the player veers too far from the optimal path they will be set upon by aggressive native creatures, such as alligators and snakes. The player's vehicle is broken at this stage (and the player is left with no supplies to begin the level), so they have to move carefully through the swamp to avoid dangers, but the player can hear their enemies searching for them in the distance. All of which will combine to convey a feeling of constantly being hunted and keep the player in a "survival" mode. The player has been chased to this location where they've crashed their boat into the swamp and must continue forward on foot, severely hampering their ability to escape from their hunters and pushing the player to continue onward.

## Style



Foggy Big Cypress (2010)

*Swamped* is a dark and creepy swampland with a heavy volume of fog coasting along the surface of the water and set during the dead of night.

Mist and fog also severely limit viewing distance, despite bright moonlight glimmering in the sky above. What little land not covered in water exists, there are a few structures, all of which seem to be in great disrepair.



Fog puts Staten Island Ferry on modified schedule for Monday evening rush (2012)



There are dim lights hanging from ropes off of old wooden utility poles that seem rotten and ready to fall apart at the slightest breeze, but still have some source of energy allowing them to light a very small surrounding area.

Fog at Night  
(2008)

An old outhouse and a bar seem ready to topple over and have been overgrown with foliage and small swamp creatures that now call them home.



Cypress Swamp on Natchez Trace (2012)



There's a constant cacophony of sound throughout the level. The lapping of water, the wind through the trees, and the sounds of various nocturnal animals in action.

(2006)

Silence

The sounds of alligators and snakes mix with those of insects, owls, and other birds with the occasional glimmer of eyes peering through the darkness.



# Full Mockup



Updated Bird's Eye View of Level "Swamped"

## Encounters

### Encounter IPMs:

#### **Name:** Flashlight Encounters

**Introduce:** Flashlight mechanic is introduced in a cinematic where a guard sees the player and then notices a snake sneaking up on him. He shines the light on the snake and the snake runs away.

**Practice:** The player runs into a snake shortly after this introduction and must ward it off, then meets several other snakes during the course of the level.

**Master:** Snakes will attack the player before they can reach further points in the level and must be warded off with the light in order to proceed. Near the end the player will be attacked by several snakes at once.

#### **Name:** Jumping Encounters

**Introduce:** Player is required to jump up some barrels in order to get past the initial flashlight acquirement area.

**Practice:** Player is required to jump across some logs floating in a waterway near the beginning of the level.

**Master:** Player jumps across limbs of a tree to access the boat that allows them to progress past the mass of guards watching the entry area.

#### **Name:** Balancing Encounters

**Introduce:** Player is required to run up a fallen pole and then walk along a wire to advance.

**Practice:** After jumping across the limbs of the tree to access the boat, the player must balance walk along a longer limb in order to reach the boat.

**Master:** Player must balance along the edge of the boat in order to reach the final enemy encounter.

#### **Name:** Jump-On-Enemy Encounters

**Introduce:** After jumping over the barrels of the flashlight area, the player is introduced to an enemy they can jump onto the head of.

**Practice:** After the wire-walk the player sees an enemy below and jumps on their head to proceed.

**Master:** At the end of the level the player must jump onto the head of the final enemy from balancing on the edge of the boat.

#### **Name:** Push-Enemy Encounters

**Introduce:** Player pushes a guard off the second level of the boat into the gators waiting in the water below.

**Practice:** Player pushes a guard off of a ledge by jumping up onto some crates behind him.

**Master:** Player jumps onto the head of a guard in order to reach his final destination.

## Encounter Descriptions:

### Name of Encounter: **Flashlight Encounters**

**Brief Description:** The player must pick up a flashlight in order to help light their path and ward off animals.

**Encounter Type:** Player versus Object & Player vs A (PvO & PvA)

**Reward:** Flashlight.

**Success Feedback:** Get to ward off animals and survive.

**Risk:** Darkness and death.

**Failure Feedback:** Player will be eaten by an animal and die, returning to beginning of level or last checkpoint.

### Name of Encounter: **Jumping Encounters**

**Brief Description:** The player must jump along several objects throughout the level in order to proceed further in the environment.

**Encounter Type:** Player versus Environment (PvE)

**Reward:** View of Area and progress through level.

**Success Feedback:** Surviving and continuing forward.

**Risk:** Player restarts the level/checkpoint by falling to their death somehow or must attempt it again if they may survive the fall.

**Failure Feedback:** Player dies in a contextual way for the encounter.

### Name of Encounter: **Balancing Encounters**

**Brief Description:** The player must balance along several objects throughout the level in order to proceed further in the environment.

**Encounter Type:** Player versus Environment (PvE)

**Reward:** View of Area and progress through level.

**Success Feedback:** Surviving and continuing forward.

**Risk:** Player restarts the level/checkpoint by falling to their death somehow or must attempt it again if they survive the fall.

**Failure Feedback:** Player dies in a contextual way for the encounter.

### Name of Encounter: **Jump-On-Enemy Encounters**

**Brief Description:** The player must jump on enemies without being detected in order to progress through the level.

**Encounter Type:** Player versus AI (PvAI)

**Reward:** Release of tension, entertaining dialog and enemy deaths.

**Success Feedback:** Enemies are dispatched without the player dying, typically with accompanying audio effects.

**Risk:** Death and restarting the level or checkpoint.

**Failure Feedback:** Player is typically seen and shot to death.

### Name of Encounter: **Push-Enemy Encounters**

**Brief Description:** The player must sneak up to enemies without being detected and push them into danger in order to progress through the level.

**Encounter Type:** Player versus AI (PvAI)

**Reward:** Release of tension, entertaining dialog and enemy deaths.

**Success Feedback:** Enemies are dispatched without the player dying, typically with accompanying audio effects.

**Risk:** Death and restarting the level or checkpoint.

**Failure Feedback:** Player is typically seen and shot to death.

## Name of Encounter: **Generator Encounters**

**Brief Description:** The player must turn off the generators in order to remove extra lights being used to hunt for the player, allowing them to sneak past an enemy.

**Encounter Type:** Player versus Object (PvO)

**Reward:** Player is allowed to sneak past enemies or continue progress in the level.

**Success Feedback:** Lights are turned off and new dialog and enemy interactions are engaged, as well as the player being able to move forward.

**Risk:** Death and restarting the level or checkpoint.

**Failure Feedback:** Player is typically seen and shot to death.

## Assets

All assets are built into the UDK or are in our custom UDK packages.

### Custom Packages:

Eat3DCinematicUDK\_Content\_Done.upk

Eat3DIntroToUDK\_Content.upk

Swamped.upk

Topdown\_test.upk

## Change Log

### Week 2 Alpha Changes:

After receiving feedback from our week one presentation at the External Producer meeting we decided to add some more game mechanics to increase the level of actual gameplay itself within our level while focusing on IPM and flow/entertainment of the level. We also looked more to the future weeks to find what requirements would be necessary so that we could have them all initially included instead of needing to add level-breaking features each week that would cause large amounts of changes on-the-fly. And then we began work on creating our Alpha build for Week 2.

### Here's a list of the key changes:

- Based on some feedback comments, adjusted our level design to be more stealthy-based with no weapon combat from the player.
- Added a closed-in area at the beginning of our level to accommodate the birth-canal requirement.
- Created an encounter where the player would discover that flashlights could be used as a deterrent against aggressive creatures in the swamp. (IPM – First encounter to learn about it, two other aggressive creature attacks to practice and master this flashlight use.)
- Scoured our level for 10-Second Rule of Thumb violations and decided to add several other encounters.

- Added a log-jumping puzzle.
- Removed our gas-gathering encounter.
- Removed our ferry start-up encounter.
- Added an encounter with a guard protecting a generator that lights pathways the player may travel through the level. (IPM – First encounter to learn about shutting off lights, another to practice on, was worried about optimal play-time and didn't add a third for mastery.)
- Added the ability to climb up near the outhouse and perform a jumping puzzle in order to meet verticality requirements.
- Added an encounter with guards that can be snuck up behind for interaction. (IPM – First encounter push a guard off edge of a boat, practice on another guard up on crates, master close-quarters-combat by dropping/jumping on a third guard's head.)
- Added a surprise end to the level where the player is knocked out as a transition to next level of the game.

### Week 3 Beta Changes:

Based on feedback received from our Alpha play-through at the External Producer meeting and fellow student play-through sessions; we discovered that we needed to do more work on explaining to the player why they are in the boat, where they are going, and who is shooting at them. We also needed to add in more cinematics to situations the player may miss if they were to play the game differently than expected so that the player would understand everything they were meant to. And we needed to fix some bugs and update our Level Design Document and Mock-Up.

#### Here's a list of some specific changes made:

- Added cinematics to guard encounter situations the player shouldn't miss seeing.
- Improved intro cinematic to show who was attacking them in the water and to let them watch it.
- Made improvements to lead the player from the outhouse onto the boat and towards their objective.
- Added audio for the level.
- Reduced environmental fog.
- Added in volumetric fog to represent shortened view distances.
- Added shaped fog to highlight lights and to use as guides for player travel in key areas.
- Replaced temporary objects and brushes with official meshes and objects.
- Added in ambient lights and lights to light-producing objects.
- Added in ambient audio and dialog audio.
- Fixed bugs so aggressive creatures would attack and follow the player better.
- Fixed bugs with guards attacking the player within a certain range and line-of-sight.
- Added foliage and other atmospheric effects.
- Removed bug where weapons would be available to the player, both from start and enemies dropping them after dying.
- Added checkpoints to key points in the level to avoid player restarting from the beginning.
- Made adjustments to intro cinematic to make it more engaging.
- Added an appropriate stopping exit at the end of the level.
- Fixed trees that were missing collision.
- Added visible gators to the river and other areas where they would kill the player.
- Added lights to the boat that would help guide the player.

- Added groups of lighted mushrooms about the level as player guidance.
- Changed the ladder on the outhouse to a vine, to better represent a more realistic environment.
- Fixed seams at the edges of our maps.
- Added audio and visual elements to drive the player forward throughout the level.

#### Week 4 Gold Release Changes:

Based on feedback from our third and final External Producer meeting we realized that we needed to target a few specific areas to complete our level design goals; Continue to fix our IPM issues, add more for the player to do throughout the level, make it even clearer what the player should do, when they should do it, and where, and make adjustments to offer better lighting for the level.

Here's a list of specific changes we made in order to address issues and meet our goals:

- Switched out the preview lighting with production lighting.
- Added more cinematics dealing with bot deaths.
- Added a few new encounter types by fleshing out IPMs.
- Added new enemy encounters to properly IPM jumping on heads.
- Added new enemy encounters to properly IPM pushing enemies.
- Added new vertical jumping encounters to properly IPM that mechanic.
- Added new balancing encounter to properly IPM that mechanic.
- Added in constant density fog volume throughout the level.
- Removed the constant density fog because the scene seemed a bit washed out and too bright.
- Added some roaming fog banks to each map instead.
- Reduced the speed of roaming fog by a lot.
- Added an Easter egg inside of the bar that allows for interaction along with an audio sample.
- Cleaned up the audio to make it clearer as well as added in some new dialog.
- Removed the lit up mushrooms around the bar which would not lead the player there.
- Increased the brightness of the mushrooms for extra visibility.
- Adjusted light on the outhouse to make certain it's visible to help with guiding the player up the vine.
- Added a blocking volume on top of the barrels located on the ferry so the player cannot jump over them.
- Tree's that would not work with materials got removed from the level and replaced with fall trees.
- Added fire and smoke to snakes as they are run off with the light.

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