

DOWNSTREAM

A RIVER BUILDING GAME FOR TWO

RULES

INTRODUCTION

Map out a river by placing cards to extend the flow of water or the shoreline. Cards can only be placed downstream of a traveling canoe, so explore the shorelines while you can!

Each player is responsible for one side of the river. Try to arrange symbols on that side to satisfy public objectives better than your opponent. Doing so will earn you ★ points.

You will also pick a secret bonus to work on for additional ★ points.

GOAL: Earn more ★ points than your opponent across the river!

2 PLAYERS • 20 MINUTES • AGES 14+

COMPONENTS



1 RIVER SOURCE: This is the starting point of the river. One player will be the **NORTH** side, the other will be **SOUTH**.



30 RIVER CARDS: These will be played to form the river. Their back sides are a mirror image of their fronts.



20 PUBLIC OBJECTIVES: Players compete to satisfy these objectives better than their opponent.

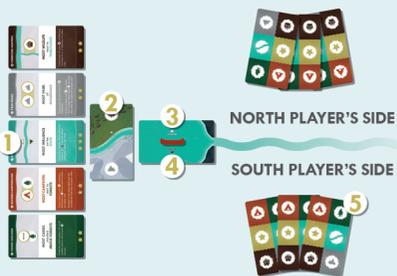


6 SECRET BONUS CARDS: These earn you points for placing symbols of their type on your side of the river.



1 CANOE: This marks where you can play cards (at the canoe's space or downstream of it). It will move as you play.

SETUP



1 Choose 1 public objective of each type (🌲, 🏞️, 🐾, 🏠, 🌊). Place them in view of both players.

There are suggested objective sets on the next page, including one for your first game!

2 Shuffle the river cards together to

form the river deck.

Do your best to avoid revealing the edges of cards in the deck!

3 Place the river source card between both players.

The river grows from here so place it near the edge of your play space!

4 Place the canoe piece on top of the river source card.

5 Deal 3 random secret bonus cards to each player. Secretly choose 1 to keep and discard the other 2.

Keep all secret bonuses hidden, even the ones you are not using!

6 Read the 5 public objective cards so that both players understand the goals for the game.

Each public objective is a contest; only the player who best satisfies it will earn the ★ points for it.

STARTING PLAYER: The player who last crossed a river plays first.

PARTS OF A RIVER CARD

See also **TRIBUTARIES** on next page.



SYMBOL (🌲, 🏞️, 🐾, 🏠, 🌊): Used to complete objectives.

TERRAIN (🟩, 🟨, 🟪): You must always connect at least 1 terrain when placing a card.

INFLUENCE ARROWS (↔️/↔️): Mark which player the river flows towards. *Flip the card for the opposite player.*

THE RIVER: The canoe can travel on cards with their river exposed.

GAMEPLAY OVERVIEW: Take turns drawing a card and placing it on the river. The game ends once all cards have been played.

ON YOUR TURN

1) DRAW A CARD

Choose 1 of these options:

A) Draw from the top of the deck.

B) Flip the deck over, then draw from the new top of the deck.

- After flipping the deck, move the canoe downstream by 1 river card if possible.

- You may not return the deck to its original side on this turn.

2) PLAY THE CARD

Choose 1 of these placement options:



A) Place the card at the end of the river.

- You must connect at least 1 terrain (🟩 / 🟨) with the card upriver of where you are placing. Terrain can be connected on either side of the river. Ignore the connecting rule for the first card played.

B) Tuck the card under another card on your side of the river.

- Tucked cards must match terrain with those above.

- There may be only 1 of each symbol per stack on each player's side of the river.

- All cards in a stack are next to all other cards on their left & right.

GENERAL CARD PLACEMENT RULES



FREE FLIP/ROTATE: You may flip and rotate cards freely before placing them.



CANOE RULE: You must place cards in the same space as the canoe or downstream of it.

After a card is played, the turn passes to the next player.

ENDING THE GAME

The game ends when all river cards have been played. Tally your ★ points from the following sources:



PUBLIC OBJECTIVES: Score any ★ from the public objectives you satisfied better than your opponent.

Objectives only refer to features on your side of the river. Do not use symbols/cards/etc on your opponent's side.



SECRET BONUSES: Score any ★ earned from your chosen secret bonus.



POINTS OF INTEREST: Score ★ for each ☆ symbol on your side of the river.

TIES: In case of a tie, both players win the contested objective/game.

TRIBUTARIES



Cards with tributaries do not have influence arrows as they do not flow towards either player.

Cards with tributaries may still be tucked, but only the half with the symbol may be left exposed.

You may not tuck cards under the side of a card with a tributary.

POINTS OF INTEREST



Worth 1 ★ each if on your side during scoring.

PUBLIC OBJECTIVE SCORING EXAMPLE

Find and read the “🐾 **CREEKSIDE HUNTERS**” and “🌿 **LARGEST BIOME**” objectives, then see below for an example of how they are scored.

🐾: 2 🐾 WILDLIFE next to TRIBUTARIES
🌿: 3½ CARDS connected by TERRAIN ()



🐾: 1 🐾 WILDLIFE next to TRIBUTARIES
(The left “🐾” is not next to a tributary and is not counted)
🌿: 3½ CARDS connected by TERRAIN ()



The NORTH side player scores 2 ★ from “🐾 **CREEKSIDE HUNTERS**” since they have the most WILDLIFE next to TRIBUTARIES.



Both sides have the same number of cards connected by terrain so no ★ are scored for the “🌿 **LARGEST BIOME**” objective.

SUGGESTED PUBLIC OBJECTIVE SETS

Try these prepared objective sets in your first few games for a more curated gameplay experience.

Once you've got the hang of things you can create your own objective sets or form sets at random!

FIRST GAME

Work on your side of the river without worrying much about your opponent.

- 🌱 Young Saplings
- 🏔️ Twin Peaks
- 🐾 Creekside Hunters
- 🏕️ Shaded Campgrounds
- 🌿 River Influencer

PROJECTS

Get a few key pieces in place early on and improve them over time.

- 🌱 Old Growth
- 🏔️ Rocky Cordillera
- 🐾 Interstream Travellers
- 🏕️ Respectful Distances
- 🌿 Largest Biome

THE WILDS

A little bit of everything here, can you handle it all at once?

- 🌱 Bordered Woods
- 🏔️ Great Valley
- 🐾 Shoreline Scavengers
- 🏕️ Immersive Tent Pads
- 🌿 Consecutive Pull

SPARSE & SEPARATED

Lots of features to avoid, place them on your opponent's side instead!

- 🌱 Isolated Stands
- 🏔️ Lonely Mountains
- 🐾 Land Mammals
- 🏕️ Alpine Bivouac
- 🌿 Tributary Contributor

PERSONAL FAVOURITES

- 🌱 _____
- 🏔️ _____
- 🐾 _____
- 🏕️ _____
- 🌿 _____

GLOSSARY

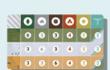
CONNECTED TERRAIN AREA: All cards of the same terrain type in stacks and/or next to one another are considered connected.

CHAIN: A series of consecutive features next to each other on one side of the river.

NEXT TO: All cards that are immediately to the left or right of one another are considered to be “next to” each other, regardless of where they are in a stack. Cards that are a part of the same stack are not considered to be “next to” each other.

SPACE: Each card at the top of a stack is considered to be a “space”. Objectives that count “spaces” between two features do not count their own spaces.

TUCK: Place a card underneath another, leaving only one symbol exposed. The terrain that this symbol is printed over must match the terrain that it is tucked under.



DISTRIBUTION REFERENCES: These cards describe how often each symbol is printed on each terrain type.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS?

Q: How can I stop the deck from slipping?

A: Some players like to hold the deck of river cards in their hand to prevent cards from slipping. Pass the deck to the next player between turns!

Q: Can I tuck under tributary cards?

A: Only under the side with a symbol.

Q: Can I use features on my opponent's side of the river to satisfy objectives?

A: No, only features on your side of the river are used for objectives.

Q: Does terrain have to match on my side of the river when placing a card downstream?

A: Not necessarily. Terrain can match the upriver card on either side of the river.



Scan to visit our online FAQ page or visit:
<https://firestarter.games/ds-faq>

THANK YOU!

A big thank you to everyone who supported the earlier versions of Downstream!

Special thanks for game development go to:

Carly Turner, Emanuelle Carrier, Stephen Savoia, Nathan Turner, Sara Daniels, Mel & Janine van Fram, Micheal Xuereb, the Strathcona Park Lodgies & the Vancouver Playtest Group.

Rules proofing by Jeremy Rozenhart.

GAME DESIGN

Sébastien Bernier-Wong
Daniel Mously

ART & GRAPHIC DESIGN

Sébastien Bernier-Wong

WWW.FIRESTARTER.GAMES

mail@firestarter.games

© 2024 Firestarter Games
PO BOX 2160 STN A
Campbell River, BC
V9W 5C5
Canada

