

Chapter Eight

Volunteers & Non-Player Characters (NPCs)

Participants at NERO events are usually PCs or NPCs. Player Characters (PCs) are the paying customers who attend the games to play their characters and interact with the campaign-provided storylines. Non-Player Characters (NPCs) are volunteers who work in the tavern or play roles, help run those storylines and play the roles which present the storylines to the PCs. The more volunteers that are available to help cook meals, run the kitchen, roleplay, fight, help run modules and present the story, the better the game is as a whole. Wildlands West invites all interested persons to investigate volunteering for the game. Volunteering is free to players; as there is no event cost associated with it. There are rewards to volunteering which may be helpful to players wishing to participate in a future game. And, of course, you will quickly find that volunteering at Wildlands is its own reward - it's a fun way to spend a weekend! Any player may wish to volunteer to provide a few hours' community service during an event. Such service is greatly appreciated and rewarded in some appropriate manner. Players may volunteer to work in the tavern in character for in-play money, or out-of character for Goblin Points at events. It is especially helpful if you let us know in advance that you'd like to volunteer to work in the tavern. Persons wishing to volunteer for an event should try to contact the Wildlands West Campaign Committee in advance of the event (preferably at least 30 days). This will help the Campaign Committee plan how much help we'll have running the event, and specifically who will be available and what their talents and experiences are. Pre-registering as an NPC dramatically increases the chances that you'll be asked to step into cool roles that require a bit of preparation, some history to them, and which are the most fun to play.

NPC Incentives

Wildlands West uses a system which involves incentive for all volunteers to pre-register their attendance with the Campaign Committee, come prepared with black shirt and black pants as a base costume, and excel in their performance during the game. Players who prove themselves reliable in that manner will be given first consideration for positions as Encounter Leaders and cool roles which may involve a little pre-game preparation. The Wildlands West Campaign Committee believes strongly in the, "Who hasn't played something cool yet?" method of casting fun roles on-the-fly during events, and is always looking for new talent. Most volunteers are given a base award of 200 Goblin Points for volunteering for an entire Adventure Weekend.

NPC Preparation

It is important that NPC players come prepared for the event. NPCs are the meat and drink of a Wildlands weekend, and it is critical for these players to do everything they can to contribute to the atmosphere of an event. Ideally, NPC players will come to events with clothing (including footwear) that is dark and without visible logos or decorations that could detract from the game's fantasy feeling. Logos or bright colors should be easy to conceal. Wildlands will attempt to provide weapons and spell packets, but these items tend to get lost or broken. It is wise to bring some weapons, packets, and repair materials to Wildlands events. If possible, bring some generic costuming and make-up, but if you don't have any available, we are happy to provide all the

costuming and make-up you'll need. It is especially welcome if an NPC has good quality props, costumes, and armor that they are willing to bring for everyone's benefit.

NPC Ranks

Every player who plays an NPC has a rank from one to ten. Every player who NPC receives a stamped card with his name and rank. As the player becomes known and trusted, this rank rises, determining the creatures and personas he is allowed to play. Rank ten NPCs will be very, very rare. NPCs that arrive without a card are limited to rank 1 activities for one event, to make sure they understand our rules and honor system, and understand the tone and flavor of game we wish to present.

Advancing Ranks

A monster marshal recommends an NPC rank advancement. The NPC advances only if all the Campaign Committee agree to the advancement. NPCs who pre-register their participation, bring dark clothes, and consistently bring their own weapons and packets will typically earn rank advancement a little more quickly.

Oath-Sworn NPCs

In order to advance to rank seven and above, NPCs must become oath-sworn. This allows the player to learn the "secrets of the universe," which means that the player is given full plot disclosure. In exchange, the player may never again play a PC in any Wildlands West game. NPCs may become Oath-Sworn by invitation from the Campaign Committee only.

Monster Cards

Any NPC engaged in an activity above rank one is given a monster card with statistics, unless a member of the Campaign Committee supervises the activity. NPCs should carry a NPC card and a monster card any time they are engaged in an unsupervised activity above rank one.

Monster Life Tags

Some creatures may have life tags, which indicate the type of essence the creature leaves behind when killed. Certain special skills or abilities may use the life tags of certain creatures.

Breaking Rules

Breaking NPC rules, cheating, playing unapproved creatures, and other similar activities will result in disciplinary action and are good ways to ensure that an NPC never advances ranks. If a serious enough violation occurs or problems are recurrent, an NPC could be asked not to return to the game. NPCs are bound by the same rules and honor code that PCs abide by.

Masks and Descriptive Phrases

Any player may ask an NPC what she looks like, but he may not call a hold to do so. NPCs respond in one of two ways. If the NPC is wearing the proper mask, makeup, and costume for the

creature type, the NPC says “Mask,” which means that the player’s appearance is accurate. If the player is not in full costume or is not wearing a mask, the NPC will give a short descriptive phrase. Every monster has a specific descriptive phrase which is written on the monster card. NPCs should respond promptly and courteously with either “Mask” or the proper descriptive phrase.

Check-In

When you reach the site, you will need to check-in at the Monster Palace to let us know that you’re present. Please ask the CC ahead of time or look on the web site for the location of Monster Palace, which varies depending upon the campsite. Your name will be given to the tavern so you can enjoy free and discounted meals there. You’ll get information on how you can help setup for the start of the event, and your cabin assignment. Please note that volunteer housing is centralized at Wildlands West, and volunteers may not stay in Player Character cabins, nor may PCs stay in the volunteer housing area. If possible, try to arrive on site by 7 pm, although earlier is even better. After checking in and moving into your cabin, find a member of the campaign committee to see what you can do to help set up the game. There are almost always props to be distributed, buildings to decorate, and modules to set up.

Check-Out

At the end of the event, please clean your cabin thoroughly, including removing all trash from both inside and out. Make certain that you have the proper number of bed frames and mattresses. Please do not leave until you have checked out with the site marshal for the NPC housing area. NPCs who fail to check out may not receive their Goblin Points for the weekend, and may possibly be asked not to return, for while we appreciate your enthusiasm in supporting the game, it is vital that we leave a clean campsite behind. When you are finished cleaning your own things, please report to the Monster Palace to see what other help is needed. We can always use extra help breaking down module areas, loading the trucks and trailer, and generally packing everything away.