

MAGICAL PHYSIOLOGIES

BRACKISH TRUDGE FIELD TRIP

For characters level 1-2

For the students' next class in magical physiologies, Professor Verelada Lang (chaotic neutral **dryad**) is hosting a class field trip to Sedgemoor. They will be journeying to its marshlands where they can observe brackish trudges in their natural environment. Professor Lang will then give her lecture near the live creature.

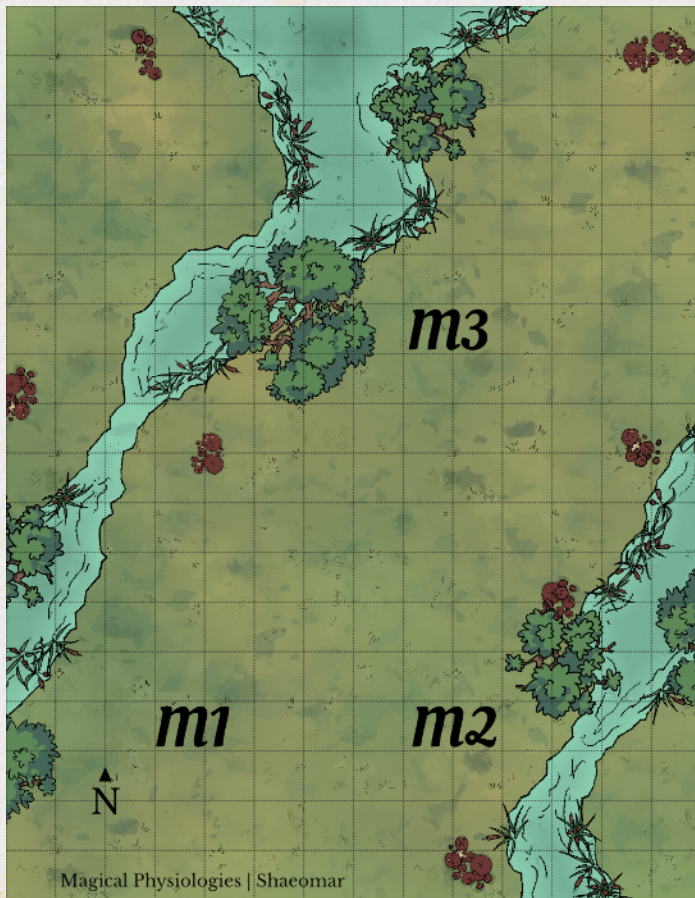
When you're ready read or paraphrase the following:

Professor Lang leads you across the spongy marshlands of Sedgemoor. The heady scent of the nearby bayou fills the atmosphere. As you walk together she speaks.

"Brackish trudges are lumbering masses of sentient fungus and vegetation that thrive in the bayou. They often venture onto the marsh areas to forage for food, that's where we'll observe them. It's weaning time for the young, so there is a good chance we'll be able to compare both young and old specimens today."

MAP: SEDGEMOOR MARSHLAND

As everyone moves through the marshland, they'll arrive at (M1). They'll see an adult **brackish trudge** (M2) (*Strixhaven: A Curriculum of Chaos*, chapter 7) grazing nearby to the east. A **brackish trudge yearling** (M3) (stat block on page 2) paces around slowly up north.



LECTURE

After taking a moment to point out and admire the animals, professor Lang will deliver a 30 minute lecture explaining brackish trudge's life cycle, natural defenses, and habitat. After, she will ask three questions pertaining to her discourse in a pop quiz.

ACADEMIC COMPETITION

If any of the characters have a budding rival, use them for this section, if not, introduce a new character to antagonize one or all of the characters. When one of the characters begin to answer a question from Professor Lang, roll 1d4, on a 3 or higher, the rival student interrupts the character and answers correctly. The professor congratulates them, focusing more on their correct answer, instead of the interruption they caused. The rival will interrupt the characters a maximum of two times. If the characters complain, Professor Lang will prevent the loud mouthed student from interrupting again.

POP QUIZ

The questions will test how well the characters listened and how studious their previous research on brackish trudges has been. Answering any of these questions requires a DC 10 Intelligence (Nature) check. Any character who gets one of the answers right gains one reroll to use during the character's next testing phase, of their next exam. (This is beyond any they would normally receive during the preparation phase of the exam process.)

Question 1. While sometimes ill-tempered and territorial, brackish trudges are usually...

Answer. Passive or docile creatures content to mind their own business.

Question 2. Why are trudges hard to kill?

Answer. The energies of life and death within and upon them allow them to survive harrowing injuries.

Question 3. How can you tell the age of a brackish trudge?

Answer. The older a trudge is, the wilder and more varied are the plants and fungi that thrive in the tiny ecosystem on its back.

FOR SCIENCE!

"Oh, look at this." Professor Lang expresses, holding up a broken piece of a mushroom. "While other animals shed fur or feathers, trudges shed plants and fungi. These are very useful in potions and remedies, and can reveal a lot about the health of the animal. Our final assignment of the day will be to retrieve specimens like this to take back for study in the lab.

"The yearlings have a completely different ecosystem on their backs compared to adults. This brackish trudge yearling seems particularly docile. Stay together and see if you can find any of its shedding. I'll go check near the adult. If everyone could please bring back one sample each for study."

FORAGING

Each character must retrieve a shed plant or fungi from the yearling. This will take around 20 minutes. As they move to the area nearby it, they can make a DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) check to find a specimen. Any character who succeeds, finds one right away.

ILL-TEMPERED TRUDGE

Professor Lang has severely misdiagnosed the temperament of the yearling. Having only recently been weaned off its mother, it remains rowdy, upset, and hungry. Also, the nutrition of its mother had become tainted by the polluted Sedgemoor. The toxins have only just begun to build up enough to have minor effects on the yearling's temperament. If the characters manage to kill the brackish trudge yearling and search its body, there will be no obvious clues to anything being wrong.

APPROACHING THE YEARLING

If any character approaches the yearling, they must do so slowly and with intent, otherwise when they get within 15 feet of the yearling it will suddenly lurch 5 feet away. If it moves away once in this manner and a character still attempts to get close, it will attack the character.

If a character approaches the trudge with the intent to tame it, they can do so with a DC 12 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check. If they succeed on this check, they will find a cluster of five shed plants and fungi as they get close. If they fail, the animal lurches away and that character automatically fails any other Wisdom (Animal Handling) check on the trudge for the rest of the day.

AGITATED ANIMAL

Even if a character has succeeded on a previous Wisdom (Animal Handling) check, after a short while, the yearling's hunger and the build up of toxins will cause it to become noticeably agitated. It will start to twist its head back and forth aggressively. The characters will either have to move at least 25 feet away from it or succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check.

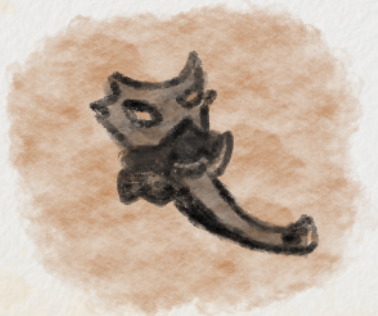
Failure. If any character attempts and fails the check, or lingers within its territory without making a check, the yearling will charge and attack them. It gains advantage on its initiative roll. The trudge will flee when it loses half or more of its hit points.

Success. If they succeed on the check, they can deduce the trudge is really just hungry. They spot some tasty mushrooms nearby to feed it. If they feed it, it nudges up to the character, giving them a lick, leaving a slimy trail of brackish trudge saliva on them.

ENDING THE THREAT

If all characters get knocked unconscious, professor Lang will step in with her fey charm or an attack at the beginning of the next round to help the characters. She carries two potions of healing.

When the brackish trudge yearling is dealt with, the professor will apologize profusely and be flabbergasted at the beast's reaction to the characters. She'll admit she should've studied the creature up close and for longer before giving her assessment of its temperament. In the end, she'll chalk it up to the weaning process and the unpredictability of nature, especially in Sedgemoor.



—A STUDENT SKETCH OF THE BRACKISH TRUDGE YEARLING.

BRACKISH TRUDGE YEARLING

Large Plant, Unaligned

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points 50 (6d10 + 17)

Speed 30 ft., Swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	4 (-3)	10 (+0)	4 (-3)

Skills Perception +2

Damage Resistances fire

Senses blindsight 10 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages —

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

Fungal Fortitude. If damage reduces the trudge to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the trudge drops to 1 hit point instead.

ACTIONS

Tusk. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: 10 (2d8 + 1) piercing damage plus 2 (1d4) poison damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 11 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

WRAPPING UP

The field trip ends shortly after the combat with the trudge has been resolved, or once the trudge has been tamed. Professor Lang will then shepherd them all back to the central campus. Depending on what occurred, read or paraphrase one of the following:

TRUDGE ATTACKED

“Well, what a day of experiential learning! Whoever said magical physiologies was boring?” Professor Lang chuckles nervously. “Gather the last of your samples and then we shall make our way back.”

TAMED TRUDGE

If the trudge was tamed or left alone read the following:

Professor Lang walks over to you while speaking, “Fascinating creatures aren't they? We can learn so much about our world from them. Gather the last of your samples and then we shall make our way back.”

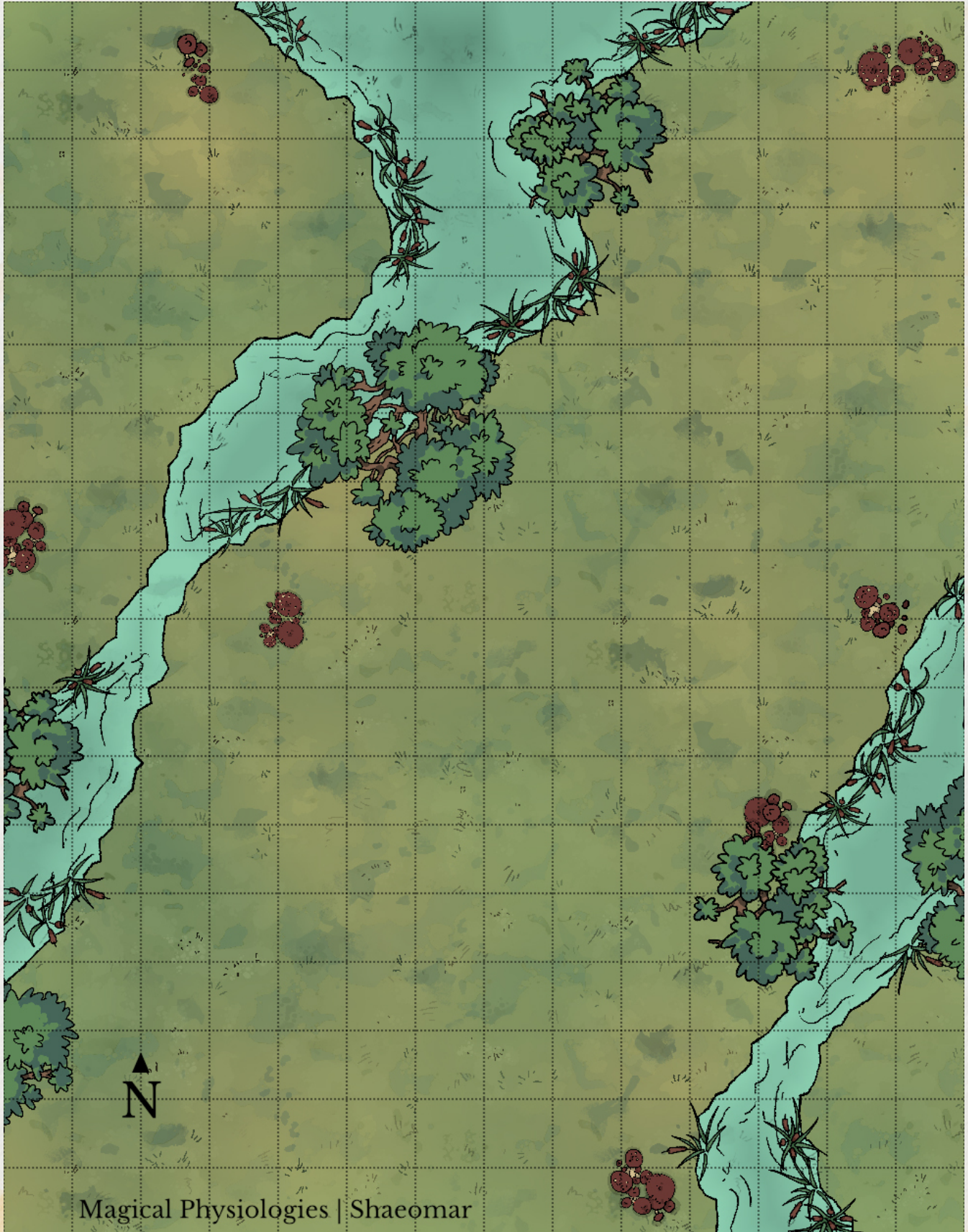
LAB RESULTS

The below sidebar can replace the “Setting up Sedgemoor” sidebar in the “All the World's a Stage” encounter.

LAB RESULTS

As the adventure unfolds, you can have professor Lang approach the group with a worried look. After conducting lab tests on the sheddings from the brackish trudges, it's clear the creatures are not healthy and something must be going on with Sedgemoor. Perhaps it had something to do with the yearling being so aggressive? She asks the characters to collect a sample from the Sedgemoor swamp waters for more testing.

SEDGEMOOR MARSHLAND



Magical Physiologies | Shaeomar