

PANNING FOR GOLD

by Greg deBeer

Panning for gold is easy, really. Get some sediment, throw it in a pan with some water, spin it around, take out the sludge, and more likely than not, you'll be left with a gold flake that you can put together with all your other flakes to smelt into something useful.

CARD DESCRIPTION

On the card you receive from the game monitor, you will see several pieces of information. The front of the card shows a series of 4-6 letters in the middle, a *Sediment Requirements* section in the upper left which has a collection of symbols, and a *Smelting Number* in the bottom right. It is important to note that the number of symbols in the *Sediment Requirements* section is the same as the number of letters in the middle of the card, and are in the same order (see below). Your *Sediment Requirements* section tells you which *Water Rules* you are looking for to solve your card.

The back of the card is your *Water Rule*, which consists of a single symbol, and a crossword style clue which solves to 2 different letters of the alphabet. For example, if your *Water Rule* was Found in the chemical symbol for gold then the answers would be A and U. The clues may involve visual, audible, or syntactic puns.

TO PLAY

Get up and mingle with your fellow players. You are looking for players who have *Water Rules* on their cards that match one of the *Sediment Requirements* on your card. When you find a match, you're in luck! Find the letter in the middle of the card that is in the same position as the *Sediment Requirement* symbol you have just matched. For example, if you find the *Water Rule* for the third *Sediment Requirement* on your card, then look at the third letter of your card. It should be a valid answer to the *Water Rule* you are looking at. That is, if the water rule you found was the one listed above, then the third letter in the middle of your card is going to be either an A or a U. Take your pencil, and change the letter to the other possible answer (which you will need to solve).

Once you have done this for every letter on the card, you will end up with a word that suggests some sort of sludge, but holding an extra letter. For example, you might end up with SLUDGE. In this case, the SLUDGE is discarded, and you are left with U, which is your gold flake.

Bring your gold flake over to the Smelter, which is posted on the wall, and write the letter in the appropriate spot, as indicated by the *Smelting Number* in the bottom right corner on the front of your card. That's all there is to it! If there are any cards left, grab another one and do it again!

THE METAPHOR/INSPIRATION

This section has no impact on how the game is played, but it may be interesting to see the concept behind the game. You (a prospector) are grabbing a handful of sediment (the cards) from the river (the monitor), and throwing it into a pan (the room you are playing in). You swirl it all around (by mingling with other players), and the water and the sediment interact, ultimately revealing a gold flake (via the sediment requirements and water rules). The gold flake is then merged with many other flakes (via smelting) to create something more interesting than the sum of the parts.