

Black Geyser: Couriers of Darkness

Modding Essentials

The Mod Manager and Modding Toolkit

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1 Introduction

1.1 About mods

Players can modify or extend many aspects of the game by creating *mods*, e.g. changing characters, items, spells, quests, or adding brand-new content. This document provides an overview of creating, applying and publishing mods for *Black Geyser: Couriers of Darkness*, including Steam Workshop support.

The game, without any mods, is referred to as the *vanilla* game.

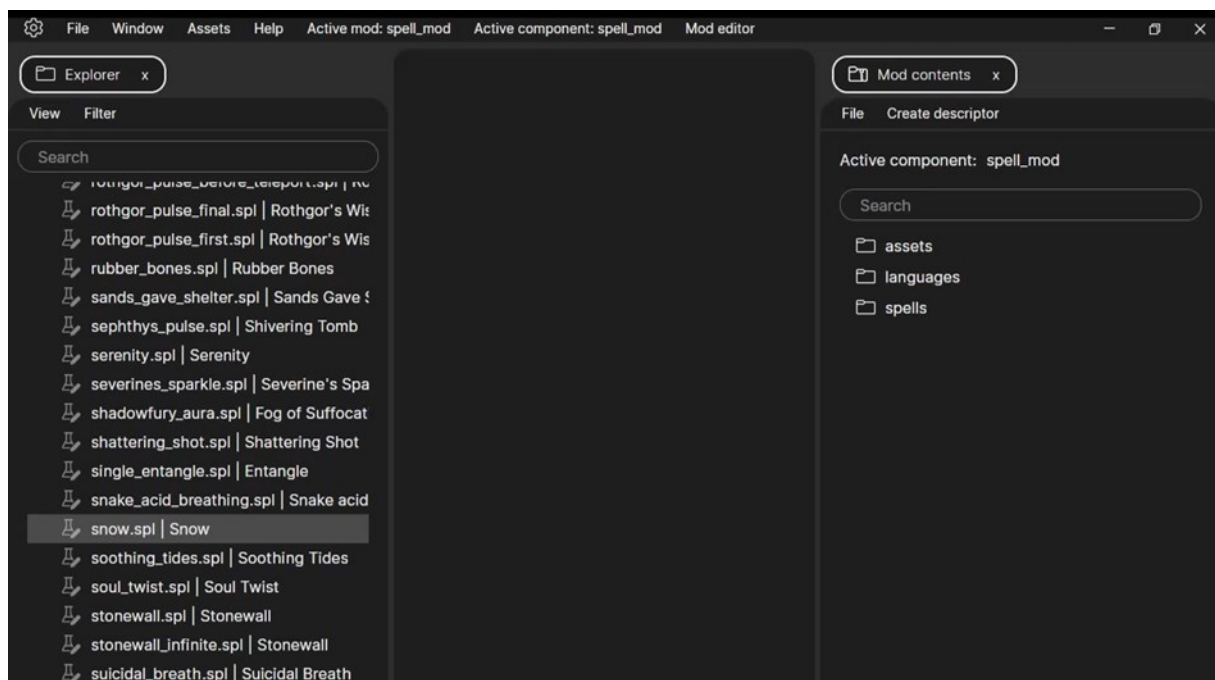
Mods can be enabled or disabled before launching the game by using the *Black Geyser Mod Manager*. They are stored in the `GrapeOcean\BlackGeyser\data\mods` folder within the user's directory.

1.2 Technical essentials

Mods can be created by using the *Black Geyser Modding Toolkit*, a standalone application available as a free download on <https://www.blackgeyser.com/modding>. You can also find tutorial videos on this website.

The *Modding Toolkit* allows you to explore the internal contents of the game, offering several editors and features to customize the game. It includes a Savegame Editor as well.

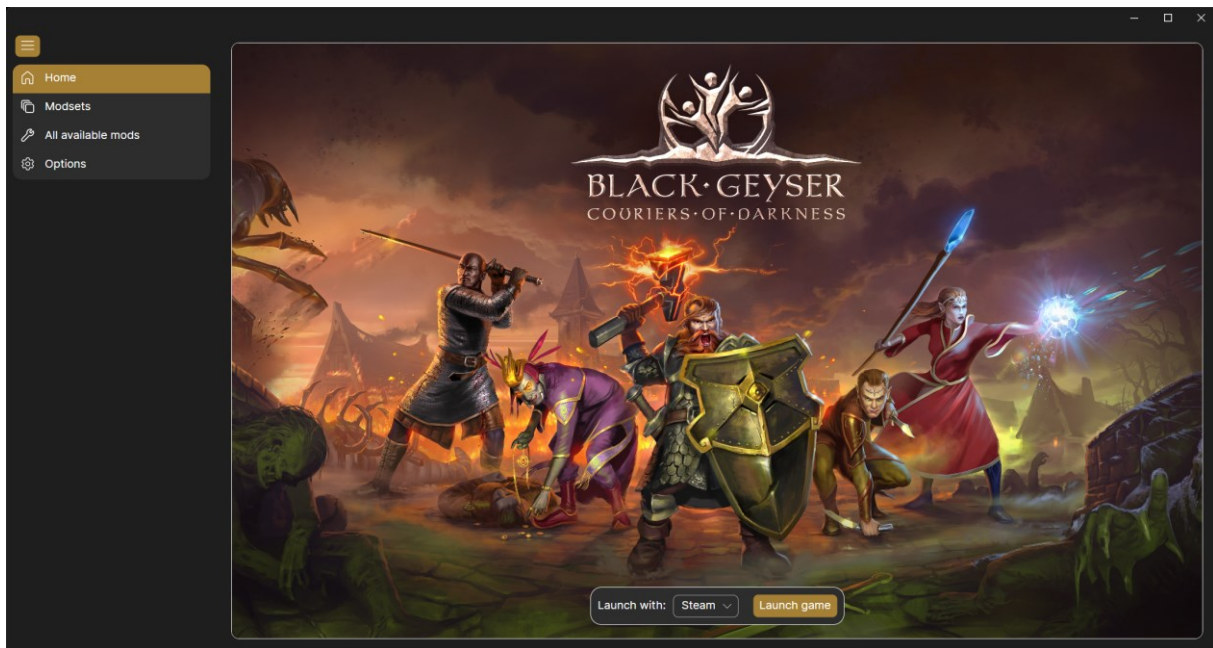
When you edit game files with the *Modding Toolkit*, your changes will be applied to *Black Geyser* without modifying the original game files. This is achieved through a special mechanism designed for loading mod content. If you wish to revert your changes in the game, simply disable your mod in the *Mod Manager*, and you're all set. However, please note that the Savegame Editor is an exception: changes made to save games will modify your local save files directly, since they are not treated as mod content.



2 Using mods


2.1 The Mod Manager


To use mods, make sure you have the latest version of *Black Geyser: Couriers of Darkness*. Modding support is only available since the 2024 December update (v1.2.61 - Update 30) of the game. The *Mod Manager* automatically starts when *Black Geyser: Couriers of Darkness* is started. You can disable this by selecting the *Skip launcher* option in Steam or using the *-nolauncher* command line argument in the Steam or GOG client.



2.2 Installing mods


To add a new mod to the game, use the *All available mods* menu. If you use Steam, you can use the *Steam Workshop* button to browse available mods on Steam Workshop. If you use GOG, or you would like to add a mod from an external source, you can use the *Add mod* button and select the mod file on your computer.

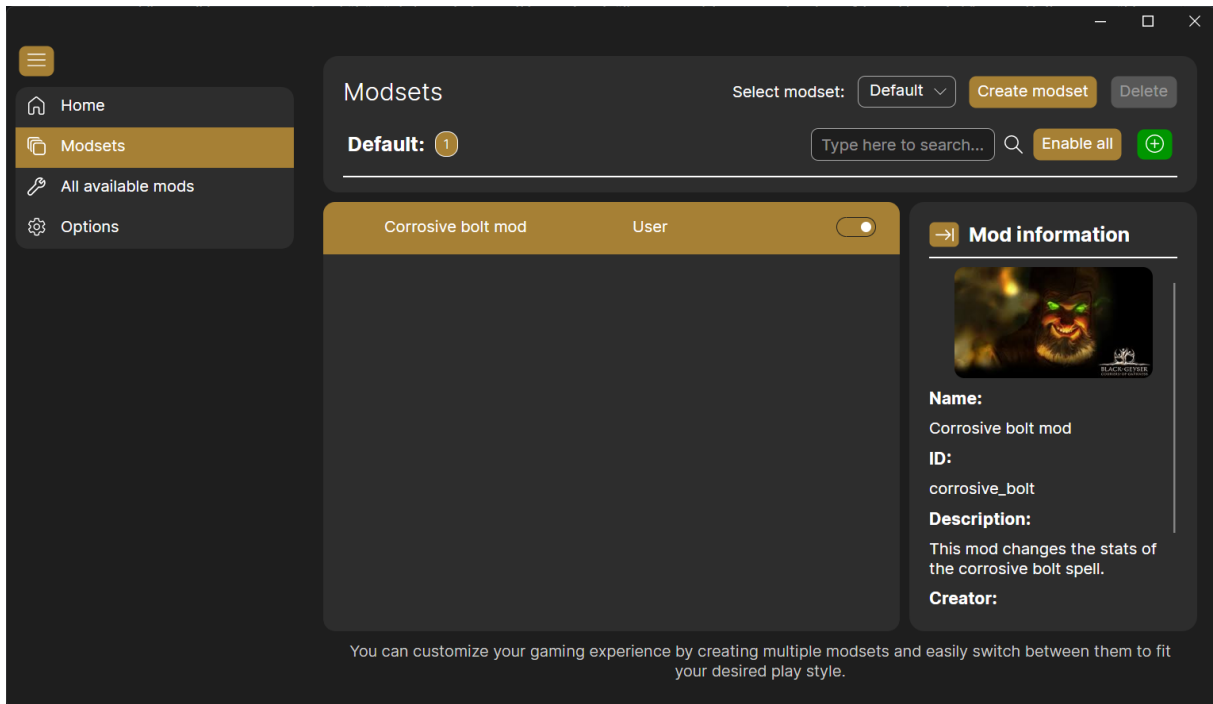
To download a mod from Steam Workshop, use the  *Subscribe* button under the mod image.

To delete a mod, use the  *Unsubscribe* button. This will remove the mod from your computer.

2.3 Enabling mods and modsets

To load a mod when the game starts, it must be added to the current modset. You can create or change modsets on the *Modsets* page.


To add a new mod to the current modset, use the  *Add mod* button on the page.





To disable all mods, you can use the *Disable all* button on the *Modsets* page. Alternatively, you can create a new, empty modset and select it.

Certain mods are dependent on each other which means that another mod must be installed as a prerequisite. The *Mod Manager* warns the user when such dependencies are present and only allows enabling a mod when all prerequisites are enabled as well.

2.4 Mod components

A mod may contain multiple distinct features called *mod components* which the user can enable or disable individually. Mod components can be enabled or disabled by selecting a mod and expanding the *Mod components* menu by using the  show components button on the *Modsets* page.

To disable a mod or mod component, select the mod and use the  disable button on the *Modsets* page. To remove a mod from the current modset, use the  delete button.

If two or more loaded mods try to change the same game element (e.g. the same character or item), the change by the mod which is loaded the latest will take effect. You can rearrange the mods in the modset to control this behavior.

2.5 Settings

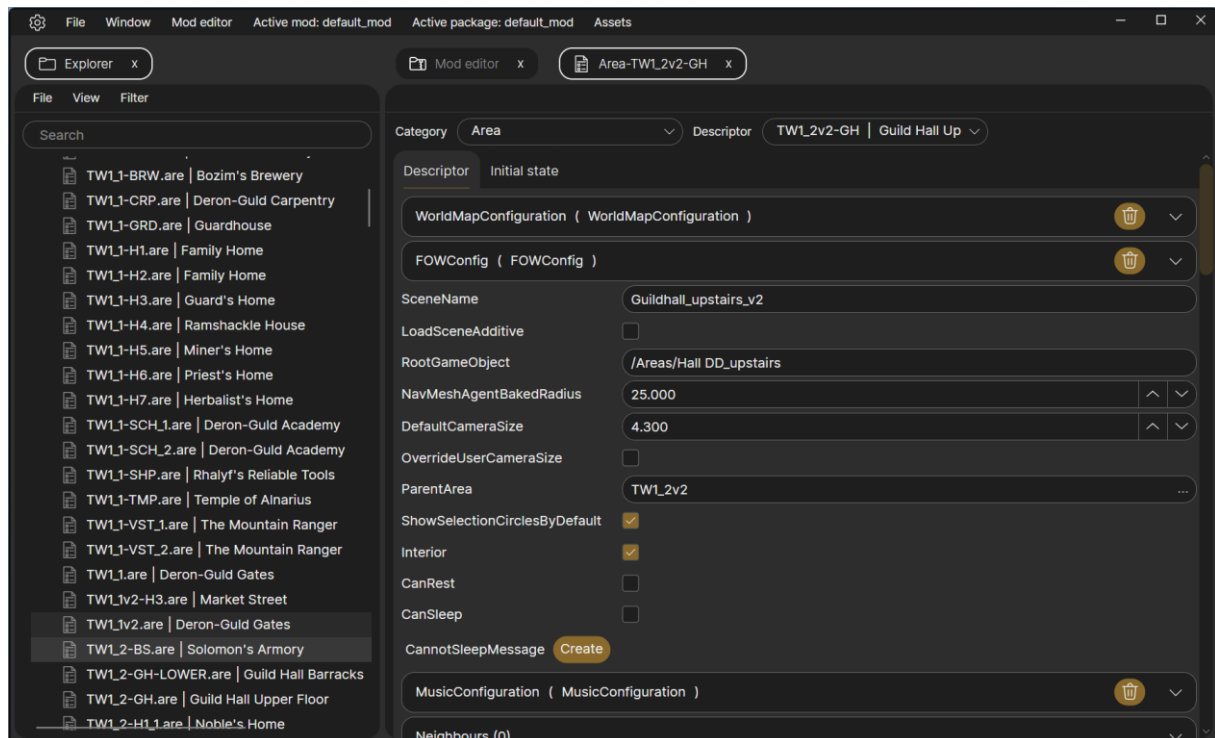
You can change the language, the theme and the font size of the *Mod Manager* in the *Options* menu. These changes only affect the *Mod Manager*. You can also change the game executable path in case you have multiple different installations of *Black Geyser: Couriers of Darkness*.

3 Modding

3.1 The Modding Toolkit

Mods are created by using the *Black Geyser Modding Toolkit*, a standalone application available as a free download on <https://www.blackgeyser.com/modding>. To use the *Modding Toolkit*, a copy of *Black Geyser: Couriers of Darkness* is required.

The *Modding Toolkit* provides a convenient way to edit game files, create new content, and save them into a mod. Additionally, you can edit save games using the Savegame Editor of the toolkit.



At first start, the *Modding Toolkit* will perform two operations:

- Extract the game data files from the installation directory
- Extract the game asset files from the installation directory

The extracted files are stored in the local file system, in the user's directory. Extracting the assets is a lengthy process which can be canceled by the user. The process can be restarted by selecting the *Run export* command from the *Assets* menu.

Extracting the game files must be repeated when a new version of *Black Geyser: Couriers of Darkness* is released. This is done automatically when an update is detected.

When using certain features of the *Modding Toolkit*, a running *Black Geyser: Couriers of Darkness* is required. The game must be launched with the “-devconsole” command line argument (without quotes). The “Launch Game with devconsole” command in the Mod editor menu provides a convenient way to launch the game with the dev console.

3.2 Creating new mods

To create a new mod, select the *Create new mod* from the *Mod editor* menu on the top menu bar. This will create an empty mod.

The mod identifier must be a unique name which identifies the mod. The Mod Manager will not allow loading two mods with the same identifier. The identifier must also be unique when uploading the mod to Steam Workshop.

You can use the minimum or maximum compatible fields to set which game versions are supported by the mod. The mod will not be compatible with any game version below the minimum or newer than the maximum. You can leave these field empty if you don't want to restrict mod compatibility. To determine the version of the installed game, open the version.txt file in the game directory.

It is possible to change the mod identifier and any other mod properties using the Window / Mod editor menu on the main menu toolbar.

3.3 Editing mods

The *Modding Toolkit* provides a set of tools and editors to create and modify mod contents:

- Mod Editor: change the properties of the currently opened mod.
- Explorer: this is a file browser that shows the original game data files.
- Mod contents: this window shows the contents of the current mod component.
- Language Tool: you can use it to change any localized text in the game.
- Variable Editor: edit the variables representing the internal state of the game with this editor.
- Asset Browser: shows game assets (audio or images) added to the mod.
- Form editors: these are used to edit the game data files, including items, creatures and spells.

Each mod may contain two types of files: game data files (also known as *descriptors*) and asset files (audio or images). The Modding Toolkit provides editors to edit the game data files. External tools are required to edit asset files.

Double click on a game file descriptor in the Explorer or the Mod contents window to open it using the default editor. You can save your changes by using the Save command in the File menu.

When saving any game content, the changed descriptor is added to the mod. The Modding Toolkit does not make any change in the original game folder.

To add a new asset, or modify an existing one, the edited asset file must first be added to the mod by using the *Asset Browser*. The asset in the mod directory can be edited by external tools.

3.4 Exporting and installing mods

To save a mod to the local file system, select the *Export mod file* command in the *Mod Editor* menu. This will pack the mod into one file which can be loaded into the game by using the *Mod Manager*, or distributed to the public.

To install a mod, you can use the *Add mod* button on the *All available mods* page in the *Mod Manager*. The *Modding Toolkit* also provides a shortcut for this: press the *Send to Mod Manager*

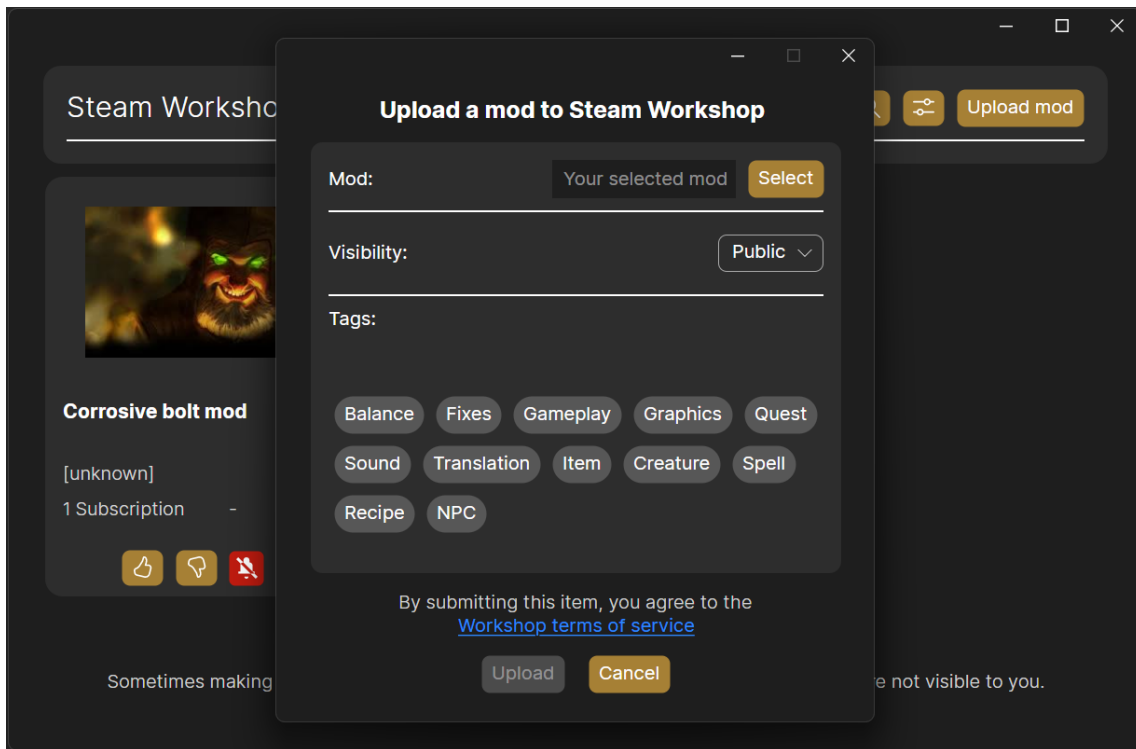
button in the *Mod editor* menu and the mod will be automatically loaded into the *Mod Manager*. This feature is intended for testing local mods.

3.5 Uploading mods to Steam Workshop

You can use the *Mod Manager* to distribute a mod in the Steam Workshop. First, export the mod and add it into the *Mod Manager* by using the *Export mod* or the *Send to Mod Manager* commands.

Start and log into the Steam client if it is not already running.

Open the *Mod Manager* and go to the *All mods* page, then open the *Steam Workshop* menu.



Click on the *Upload mod* button and select the mod you want to upload.

You must be the author of the mod, and you must set a unique mod identifier before you can upload it to *Steam Workshop*.

By clicking the *Upload* button, you automatically accept the Steam Workshop terms of service agreement.

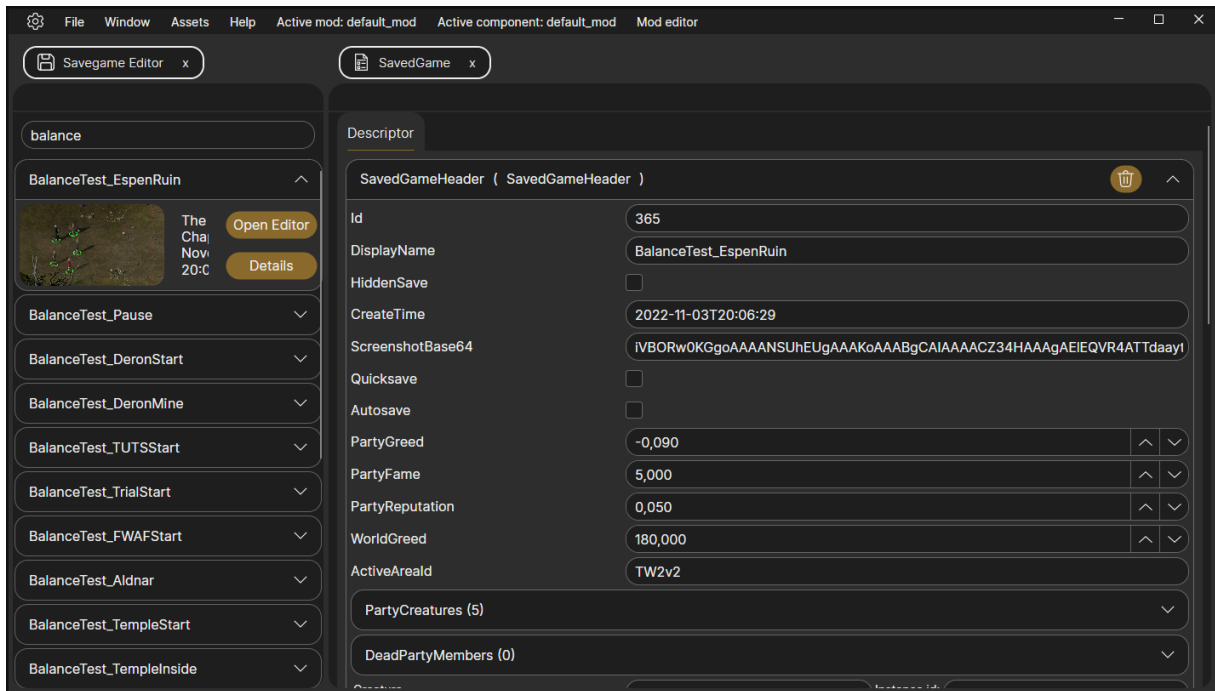
You shouldn't subscribe to your own mods. If you upload your mod to *Steam Workshop* and you subscribe to it, you will receive a mod loading error in the *Mod Manager*. The reason for this is that your local mod and the mod downloaded from *Steam Workshop* have the same mod id. This is corrected by unsubscribing from your mod in *Steam Workshop* or deleting the local version of your mod. The two mods are exactly the same, so the recommended solution is to not subscribe to your mods. Subscribing to your own mod will also create the same problem when you export a new version of your mod from the Modding Toolkit and try to upload it to *Steam Workshop*.

3.6 Editing save games

The Savegame Editor is part of the *Modding Toolkit* that enables you to edit the game's save files. While not strictly a modding feature, it is helpful for altering the saved game state when testing mods.

When you edit a save game, your local save files will be directly modified, meaning they are not handled or exported as mod content.

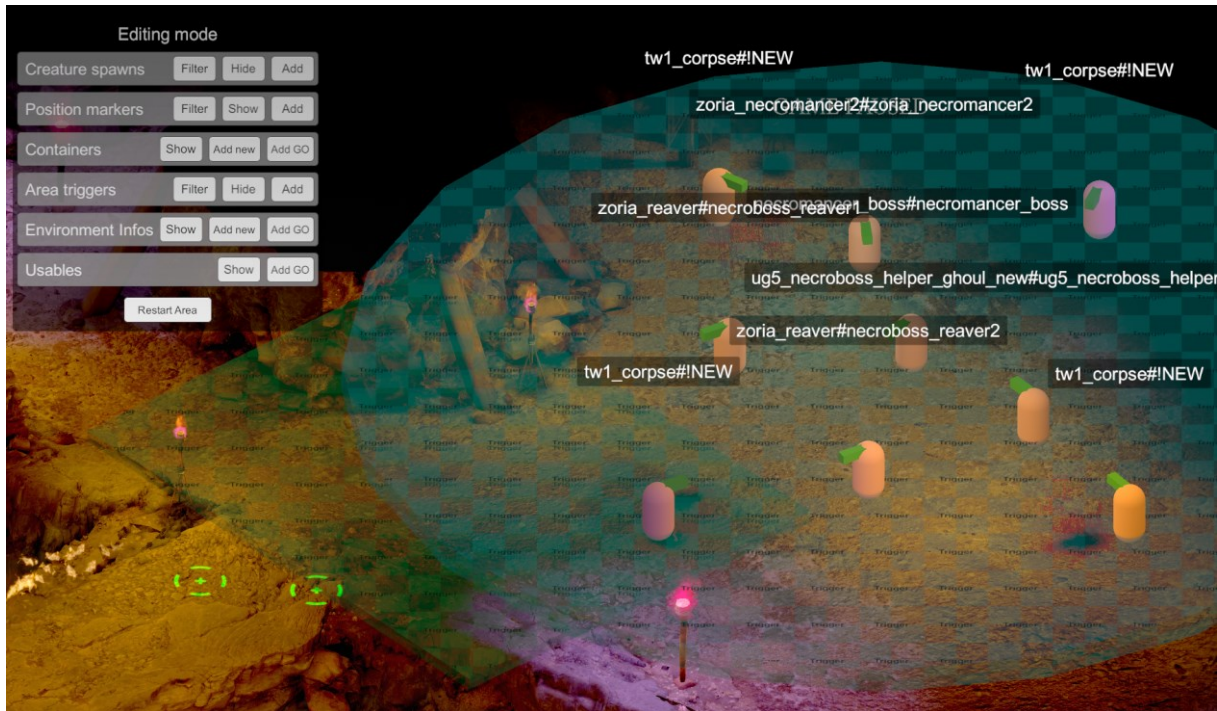
To open the Savegame Editor, use the *Window* menu on the main menu toolbar.



4 Advanced Modding

4.1 Editing mode

Editing mode can be used to edit certain area elements directly from the running game, including spawn points, area triggers, position markers, containers etc.



To enter editing mode, launch *Black Geyser: Couriers of Darkness*, then start or load a new game and press F9.

You can use the *Editing mode* menu to view, edit and add game elements to the area. Your changes are automatically sent into the *Modding Toolkit* which saves your changes to the appropriate area descriptor file and add the file to your mod.

If you edit an area descriptor using the editing mode, make sure that the descriptor is not edited simultaneously using the *Modding Toolkit*. Editing in parallel will result in write conflicts and possible loss of data.

Tips for using Editing Mode:

- Press F1 to open the in-game development console
- Use the console command `area <area_code>` to switch to the area you want to edit. The list of areas is available in the *Modding Toolkit*, by expanding the *areas* folder. Example: 'area TW1_2'.
- To leave editing mode, press the Restart Area button. You can also reload an existing save game from the main menu.
- Do not edit the same area in the *Modding Toolkit* if it is already opened in Editing Mode.

4.2 The development console

To access the development console, run the game with the `-devconsole` argument. You can set this in the Steam or GOG Galaxy client under the game's properties.

To open the in-game development console, start a new game or load an existing save game, then press the F1 key.

Type *help* into the console and press enter to list the available commands.

4.3 Descriptor folder structure

The descriptor files are organized into subfolders according to their type. Use the *Explorer* to browse these files and open them.

The following list describes the most important descriptor types:

- **Areas:** they contain all area related data, including spawn points, area triggers and containers. You cannot currently create new areas using the *Modding Toolkit*, but it is possible to change them. It is also possible to use the in-game F9 Edit Mode to place and edit spawn points, area triggers, position markers, environment infos and usables directly in the game area.
- **Creatures:** they describe an in-game creature, including player characters, neutral NPCs and enemies. It is possible to create new creatures or change existing ones by using the *Modding Toolkit*. You can place creatures on the area by placing Creature Spawns via editing mode (shortcut: F9) directly from the game.
- **Items:** they describe an in-game item. It is possible to create new items by using the *Modding Toolkit*.
- **Spells:** they describe an in-game spell. You can create new spells, or modify existing spells. You cannot create new spell effects, however.
- **Quests, Dialogs and Cutscenes:** these together are used to create quests and various in-game events, NPC interactions, etc.

4.4 Overwriting descriptors

Currently, *Modding Toolkit* supports *file-based modding* only. When you make a change to a descriptor, the whole descriptor file is placed in the mod, including all of its unchanged properties as well. This means that if two or more (enabled) mods modify the same descriptor, the descriptor from the mod which is loaded the latest will take effect. The Mod Manager will display a warning if it detects such incompatibilities when the player tries to enable a mod.

A notable limitation resulting from file-based modding is related to game areas. It is currently not possible to modify the same area for multiple mods without overwriting each other's changes. For example, if your mod places new creatures or items in the same area as another mod, and both mods are enabled in the *Mod Manager*, only the changes from the last loaded mod will take effect in the area. The area's name will be shown in the warning when the player enables the mods in the Mod Manager, allowing the player to make an informed choice about which mods they want to use.

4.5 Using custom asset files

You can use your own image and audio files in your mods.

Currently supported formats are as follows: *png* for images, and *wav*, *ogg* for audio.

It is possible to use a completely new asset file and refer to it in your descriptors, or you can override an existing asset file and replace it everywhere in the game.

To use a custom asset file, open the *Mod asset browser* from the *Window* menu.

The left panel shows the asset files available in the vanilla game. The right panel shows the asset files added to your mod. You can select an asset file on the left panel and add it to the mod using the *Add to mod assets* context menu command. You can then use the *Open enclosing folder* context menu command to open the location of the file in your mod component and use your favorite editor to change the file.

Alternatively, you can use the *Add new asset file* context menu command to add your own asset file under the *audio* or *textures* folder in your mod.

You can later select these files in the form editor when editing a game descriptor.

For example, to change the inventory image of an item, open the item descriptor in the Mod Manager and click on the *Browse* button under *Material and Appearance / Icon*. This opens the *Mod asset browser* window where you can select your asset file.

4.6 Localization

To add or change localized content, run the Language Tool from the *Window* menu.

The Language Tool shows a list of hierarchically organized keys. You can edit the corresponding value in the editor window after selecting a key.

Keys are automatically created for the English language when creating or duplicating descriptors. However, they must be manually added for other languages. Use the *Tools / Sync language files* menu in the Language tool to add any missing language keys for the currently selected language.

The top level of the key hierarchy roughly follows the descriptor types. See the table below for the most important descriptors.

Top level language key	Descriptor
AREA	Areas
CRE	Creatures
DIA	Dialogs
ITM	Items
QST	Quests
SPELL	Spells

Expanding these lists, you will find a list of names matching the descriptors. Expanding a descriptor shows a list of language keys. To edit localized content, you can select a key and enter or change the localized text.

For example, to edit the description of the Grandmaster's Wardstone item, open the *Language Tool*, select your language, then select *Keys/ITM/agelas_wardstone/Description* and enter your text in the *Key Editor* window. After saving your changes, the modified translation file will be placed into your mod file.