

SPECTRAL RAILS™

For years prospectors, speculators, and frontier folk flocked to remote areas of the American Southwest in search of their fortunes. Makeshift towns cropped up around rich mines of copper, silver, gold and other precious commodities, only to fade away as the resources ran out. Now only ghost towns are left as testament to the community that once lived there.

While the lucky ones made their fortunes; most folks barely scratched out a meager existence in these harsh and lonely towns. Some died lonely deaths in these places far from home, and now their souls wander around these ghost

towns haunting them until the day when their soul can return home to achieve final peace.

The ghost trains are these lost souls' ticket to rest. These spectral trains glide majestically along ethereal rails looking for lost souls and give them passage homeward.

You are the engineer of a ghost train. Your job is to find lost souls in various ghost towns and deliver them to their home towns so that they can achieve final peace.

CONTENTS



1 Game Board

The double-sided board depicts 24 actual ghost towns in six American Southwestern states (3 per state). The side that you use depends upon the number of players in the game. Use the 6-state side for 4-players, the 5-state for 3 players. The towns are connected by ley lines of varying lengths made up of ether spaces. The ghost trains travel along these ley lines from ghost town to ghost town delivering souls. Beside each ghost town is a box that is used to place the soul tiles in each of the 2 rounds of the game.

4 Ghost Train Mats

The mats (1 per player) are divided in to two sections. The section at the top represents your ghost train. It depicts an engine and six passenger cars and is used to indicate which souls are currently on your train, and how full your train is. The bottom section of the train mat is your cemetery. This is used to indicate the value of the souls you deliver during the game. The left-hand section is for 1-point souls, the right-hand section for 2-point souls.



54 Soul Tiles

These tiles represent individual souls. They are marked with that soul's home town, as well as an outline of the state where that town is located. There are two sets of soul Tiles. A Dark Set for the First Round, and a Light set for the second round. The dark set has two souls destined for each town. The light set has 1 soul destined for each town.



6 Train Wreck Markers (3 dark & 3 light)



1 Spirit Leader Marker & Plastic Base



8 Coins for the Ferryman (2 per player)



36 Ether Cards in 4 colored sets — 9 Cards per set.



4 Ghost Trains in 4 different colors



52 Ether Trail Segments in 4 different colors, 13 pieces of each color

THE OBJECT OF THE GAME

As an Engineer you score points for each soul you deliver, plus bonuses for delivering various sets of souls. The Engineer that scores the most from delivering souls wins the game.

The ghost towns are connected to each other by mystical paths of energy called ley lines. Your train will travel along ley lines between these towns using "The Ether" as a power source. Traveling the ether causes a long ether trail to stream out behind your train as you go from town to town. But, as every ghostly engineer knows, Ether is a tricky thing. Other Ghost Trains can travel on your ether trail for free, so other Engineers may take advantage of the trail you've blazed. However, your Ghost Train may never travel on your own ether trail; it simply blocks your way. Fear not; since ether is by its very nature "ethereal" your ether trail will dissipate over time...

SETUP

1. Place the board in the center of the table. Correct side up depending upon the number of players. The 4 player map includes California, the 3 player map does not.

2. Each player chooses a color and receives 1 Train Mat, 1 Ghost Train, 9 Ether Cards and 13 Ether Trail Segments in this color. Additionally each player takes 2 Ferryman Coins. The ether cards form your card hand, the rest of the elements are placed in front of you. Be sure to leave enough room by your train mat to play your cards and form your own discard row during game play as shown on the right.

3. Divide the soul tiles by color (a dark pile and a light pile) and place the 18 light tiles aside for use in the second round of the game. Mix up the 36 dark tiles and place two tiles in each ghost town in a completely random fashion. For example, you could place them all face down at first, and then flip them all face up. Or, if you want a faster setup, just place them face up in a way agreeable to all players where no attention is paid to which souls are placed on which towns.

4. Look at the soul tiles you just placed and check if any of them are currently in their hometown (for example, a Organ soul was randomly placed in Organ). If any are, remove them from the game (*these souls have already achieved final peace*) as shown below.



2



5. Place the 3 black/dark train wreck markers on the towns with the black train icons (Coloma, Ruby, and Como). The red/light train wreck markers are placed aside for use in the second round.

6. Give the spirit leader token to the sleepest player to start the game (or some other appropriate random method). This player is now the temporary Spirit leader, and must start the bidding for the role of spirit leader for the first sequence of the game (see the **Choosing the Spirit Leader** on page 3).

7. Players perform their initial train placement, starting with the winner of the spirit leader bid and continuing in player order (see *the Choosing the Spirit Leader below*).

GAME PLAY

Spectral Rails is played in two rounds. Each round consists of multiple Sequences.

Sequences are played with three phases, and each phase is played in turns performed in player order, starting with the spirit leader and continuing clockwise around the table:

- I. **Choosing the Spirit Leader Phase:** Each engineer either bids or passes until all players have passed.
- II. **Movement Phase:** This phase is made up of successive turns. Each engineer, in succession, performs a complete movement turn until all Engineers have passed.
- III. **Ending the Movement Phase & Replenishment:** Once all engineers have passed their movement turn, each replenishes their cards and coins.

I. CHOOSING THE SPIRIT LEADER

This is a bidding phase for control of the spirit leader marker. Beginning with the current spirit leader, you may use your ether cards to bid to win the right to choose who will become the next spirit leader. If you win the bidding, you may either choose to become the spirit leader yourself, or choose another player to become the spirit leader instead. If you decide to become the spirit leader, keep the spirit leader marker yourself. If you choose someone else, give the spirit leader marker to that player.

To start the bidding, the current spirit leader either passes, or chooses any number of cards from his hand and places the bid face up in front of them. These cards must be played in an order of the bidder's choice from left to right (as shown here).



Then continuing clockwise each engineer may bid to surpass the highest value bid by placing the value in ether cards into their discard row. Cards must always be played in a row from left to right in front of each player. **The order that the cards are played into the discard row is very important** to the game and must **always** be maintained. Once your ether cards are played, **you may not rearrange them**, they **must** be left in the order that you played them at all times.

In order to be the highest bidder, your bid must satisfy the following two conditions:

- **First, the value** of your bid must **exceed** the current high bid. (for example: If the current high bid is 4 you must bid 5 or more).
- **Second, the number of cards** in your bid must also **equal or exceed** the number of cards in the bid you are trying to beat. (for example: If the current high bidder used 3 cards to make his bid of 4, you must use at least 3 cards to make your bid of 5 or more).

You may **never** replace or switch any cards that you have already played into your discard row. However, you may add cards to those previously bid in order to increase your bid.

You are **never** obliged to bid; you may **always** choose to pass. However, once you pass, you are out of the bidding phase, and may not re-enter until the next bidding phase. Furthermore, if no one bids (*i.e. everyone passes*), then control of the spirit leader marker is kept by the player currently in possession of it.

Bidding continues until all but the highest bidding engineer have passed. The highest bidder takes control of the spirit leader marker.

If you win control of the marker, you (and only you) now perform three actions:

- **First**, you may remove from the board a number of **your own** ether trail segments equal to the value of the ether cards you bid. These ether segments are returned to your personal reserve (**note: In the first bidding phase of the game ether trail segments cannot be removed from the board, as none have been played yet**).
- **Second**, you must now choose an engineer to be the new spirit leader. You may choose either yourself or another engineer. Give the spirit leader marker to

your chosen player. The new spirit leader is now the starting player for all of the following phases until the end of the next bidding Phase.

- **Third**, flip all of the cards you just bid face down in front of you. Remember to strictly maintain the order in which you bid them from left to right.

If you did not win the marker, you get to **keep one** (and only one) of the cards you just bid with. If you only bid one card you **must** take that card back into your hand. If you bid two or more cards, you must choose which card to take back. If you did not bid, you take back nothing. Any remaining cards are flipped face down in your discard row (just like the winning bidder). The losing bidders **do not** get to remove any ether trail segments from the board.

Example of bidding:

Pat is the spirit leader, and opens with a bid of 1, by playing a "1". Morgan is next and bids 3, by playing "2" & "1". Now if Chris wants to outbid Morgan, Chris must bid 4, and use at least 2 cards. Chris chooses to bid 4 by playing "2" & "2". Pat passes and takes back her "1" card. Morgan passes and chooses to take back his "1" card and turns his "2" face down. Chris turns both of her "2" cards face down, and takes 4 ether trail segments from the board. Then Chris takes the spirit leader marker from Pat. Chris now chooses who will be the spirit leader for the remaining phases of the segment. Chris decides to give it to Morgan rather than keep it. Morgan is now the spirit leader.

INITIAL PLACEMENT OF THE GHOST TRAINS

(FIRST TURN ONLY)

Once the initial bidding round is complete, starting with the chosen spirit leader and proceeding in turn order (clockwise), each engineer places his train in any ghost town they wish. You may place your train in a ghost town where another player has already placed their train.

Note: If you choose to begin the game in a town with a train wreck marker, it does not trigger a train wreck (see **Ending Round 1 & Round 2 Setup** on page 7).

II. MOVEMENT PHASE

Starting with the spirit leader, each engineer performs a complete movement turn and then continuing clockwise, each engineer takes their movement turn, continuing from engineer to engineer until everyone passes their movement turn. Once you pass your movement turn, you may not move again during the current movement phase. Each movement turn is performed in the following order:

Movement Turn Order

A. Pick up a Soul

B. Moving your Ghost Train

1. **Playing Ether Cards**
2. **Selecting Your Ether Trail Segments**
3. **Placing Ether Trails**
4. **Moving Your Train**
5. **Coins Special Circumstances**

C. Deliver Souls

A. PICK UP A SOUL:

You may **only** pick up a soul tile **at the beginning** of your movement turn. You are not required to pick up a soul, but if you choose to do so, you may **only** pick up **1 soul tile** per movement turn.

You may only pick up a soul tile **from the ghost town where your train begins** its movement turn. If there are no soul tiles in that town (or if did not begin your movement in a town) then you may not pick up a soul tile.

Once picked up, the soul tile is placed on your ghost train in one of the passenger cars. The first soul is placed in the first car, second in the second car, and so on (see *example below*).

A ghost train may hold up to three soul tiles without any penalty. However, if a fourth soul tile is added, the weight of the extra soul causes a burden on the train. As a penalty for this burden you **MUST** discard one ether card (of any value) from your hand into your discard row (face up). This discard must be done again when a fifth or sixth soul is added to the train. A train may never hold more than six soul tiles (see *example below*).



Once soul tiles are on board your train, they will not leave until you deliver them to their hometown (see *Delivering Souls* on page 7).

B. MOVING YOUR GHOST TRAIN:

Movement is determined by the value of ether cards that are played on your turn in addition to the use of other engineer's tracks. To move your ghost train, you must play ether cards to generate ether trail segments which are placed in the empty spaces behind your train as it moves along (Think of these segments not as rails you lay out in front of you to travel on, but as a plume of otherworldly steam & smoke trailing behind your ghost train as it moves along a ley line).

If you wish to move your ghost train, you must do so in the following fashion, on your turn:

1. Playing Ether Cards: In order to move your train over **empty** ley line spaces, you must play your ether cards to fuel the train's movement. For each empty ley line space you wish to travel across, you must play ether cards with a value that equals or exceeds the number of empty

spaces you wish to travel across (for example if you wish to travel across 4 empty ley line spaces, you must play cards with a total combined value of at least 4). You are not required to move the full value of the ether cards you play, but any surplus not used cannot be carried over to subsequent movement turns.

When playing ether cards, each card is placed face up in your discard row in order from left to right (*again, placement order must be maintained*).

During any single movement phase **you MAY NOT play more than 13 points worth of ether cards**. Once you have spent 13 movement points during a phase, you must pass.

As mentioned above, you only have to play ether cards to move your train over **empty** ley lines. This is because you can move your train over **your opponent's ether trail segments for free** (*they have forged a trail for your train*). However, you may **NEVER move over your own ether trail segments** (*they form a buffer against your train*).

Movement Example:

In the first example, Red wants to move her train from Alta to Ludlow and sees that all three ley line spaces between the two towns are empty.



Red must play ether cards with a total value of 3 or more to cross these spaces. This could be done with three "1" cards, one each of "1" & "2" cards, a single "3" card or a single "4" card. She decides to play a "2" and a "1" and places them into her discard row.



Green moves next and wants to move his train from Alta to Como and notices two choices. He can either travel there directly crossing 3 empty ley line spaces. Or, he can travel there via Ludlow on the ether trail segments that Red and Yellow have already placed (3 red and 2 yellow) crossing only 1 empty ley line space.

This means that Green has a choice of playing ether cards with a total value of 3 or more (filling the direct route between the two towns), or by playing ether cards with a total value of 1 or more, using Red & Yellow's existing ether trails, and filling the one remaining empty ley line space with his own ether trail segment. Green Chooses the value 1 option, of course.



2. Selecting Your Ether Trail Segments:

Once you have played your ether cards, you must take into your hand a number of ether trail segments equal to the value of the ether cards you just played. These ether trail segments are then placed on the board behind your train as it moves. If after performing your movement, you have any ether trail segments left in your hand, you simply place them back into your reserve.

When taking the ether trail segments into your hand, you must always take segments from your own ether trail reserve first. Once your reserve has been depleted, you may then remove ether trail segments that you previously placed from the board (*After all, ether is, ethereal, and as such, it dissipates over time*).

When removing ether trail segments from the board, you must remove them according to the following rules (see also the example in the next column):

- First you must remove any ether that is completely disconnected from the ether trail that is currently connected to your ghost train. If your train is **adjacent to** a single ether trail segment or a chain of segments of **your own color**, that ether trail is **considered currently connected**. It does not matter if the Segments were placed this turn or any previous turn, if they directly connect to your train, they are connected. You are free to remove any of your disconnected ether in any order you choose.
- If there are absolutely no disconnected ether trail segments to remove (all of your ether segments are connected to your train) you may begin to remove the segments that are currently connected to your ghost train. When removing segments that are connected to your train, you may remove **any of your own** ether trail segments that you wish, no matter how closely they are connected to you. **Note:** *You may not remove your ether trail segments from a ley line and then immediately move along those same spaces on the same turn (see 3. Placing Ether Trails section).*

Ether Removal Example:



3. Placing Ether Trails: Once you have taken the correct number of ether trail segments into your hand, you must place them on the empty ether spaces along the ley line your train traverses. Remember that your ghost train may travel across the ether trail segments of other engineers at no cost to you, but you may NEVER travel over any of your own previously placed ether trail segments. Further, you may never travel across ley lines where you just removed ether segments this movement turn.

4. Moving the Train: Move your ghost train to its destination. Ghost trains may end their movement on any space along a ley line. They are not required to end in ghost towns. A ghost town does not count as a space for movement, but a train may end its turn in the town by connecting an ether trail to it, or by moving into it using another Engineer's ether trail. If you do not end you turn in a ghost town then you should place your train beside the last ether trail Segment you traveled on (*don't cover up the empty ether space in front of you, as other Engineer's may want to move along it on their movement turn*).

5. Coins and Special Circumstances: You are not required to play ether cards in order to move your ghost train. In some situations, you will be able to move your ghost train entirely along other engineers' ether trails without having to play any ether cards and trails of your own. However, as nothing in life (*or the afterlife apparently*) is free, you must spend one of your Ferryman coins for each movement turn you move in this fashion (spending no ether cards or Placing your own ether trail segments). When spending the coins, place them in the middle of the board near the "Four Corners" region (*the nexus of Utah, Colorado, Arizona and New Mexico*). This means that you have the potential to take two

movement turns per movement phase where you spend no ether cards, but use the Ferryman coins instead. These coins will be replenished once all Engineers' have passed on their movement turn.

In the extremely unlikely event that your train becomes completely trapped by your own ether trails (all surrounding ley lines contain your own ether trail segments), you may play ether cards to remove ether trail segments from the board at a rate of 1 ether point per segment removed (i.e. play a value 2 ether card to remove 2 ether segments). However, as a penalty you may not move this turn. Instead you simply place these removed segments into your ether reserve, and you may move again normally on your next movement turn. Ether cards played in this fashion are played, in order, to the ether discard row as usual.

C. DELIVERING SOULS

If you have ended your movement in a ghost town that matches one or more of the soul tiles riding in your ghost train, you may deliver those souls to their home.

You must end your movement in the town to deliver the souls. You cannot drop them off and continue moving in the same movement turn (but remember that there are several movement turns per movement phase, so you can continue on during your next movement turn).

When you deliver a soul in round 1 of the game, place the soul tile face down in the "1" section of the cemetery on your of your ghost train mat.

When you deliver a soul in Round 2 of the game, the soul is placed into either the "1" section or the "2" section of the cemetery, depending upon what type of soul it is.

- 1st round souls (dark background) delivered during the 2nd round of the game go into the "2" section of the cemetery.
- 2nd round souls (light background) delivered during the 2nd round of the game go into the "1" section of the cemetery.

These two sections of the cemetery indicate the different values of the souls for scoring purposes (see **Scoring** on page 8).

After Delivering souls you must shift the remaining souls on board your ghost train towards the front of the train (leaving no spaces between) to

indicate how many passenger cars are now filled as shown in the example below.

Before
delivery to
Elgin



After
delivery to
Elgin



III. ENDING THE MOVEMENT PHASE AND REPLENISHMENT

Movement turns continue clockwise until all players have either passed their movement turn or played 13 points worth of ether cards this movement phase (and are thus forced to pass). When all players have passed, the movement phase ends.

Replenishing ether cards: Once the movement phase ends turn all of the face-up ether cards in your discard row face-down. Now take half of your face down ether cards (rounding down) from your discard row back into your hand drawing **one ether card at a time from the left to the right** along the discard row. In effect the cards that you played first are now back in your hand and the cards you played more recently remain in your discard row. This is why it is vital to maintain the order of card in your discard row at all times during the game.

Replenishing Ferryman Coins: If you spent any Ferryman coins during the just finished movement phase, **refill your stock to 2 coins**.

After completing ether replenishment it is time to bid for another spirit leader. The bidding starts with the current holder of the spirit leader token (as described in Sequence 1: Choosing the Spirit Leader).

ENDING ROUND 1 AND ROUND 2 SETUP

Ending Round 1: There are three round 1 train wreck markers on the board (in Coloma, Ruby, and Como). When a ghost train stops on, or passes through, any ghost town with a train wreck marker, the ghost train causes a train wreck (presumably it spooked a real-world engineer, and caused that train to crash). The corresponding train wreck marker is removed from the board, and placed in the appropriate space on the train wreck track at the bottom left of the game board. Once the three round 1 train wrecks have occurred, round 1 will end at the end of the soonest ether replenishment phase

(i.e. everyone gets the opportunity to finish all of their movement for the current movement phase before the round ends). Once all players have completed their movement and replenishment, round 1 ends and you must set up round 2.

To Set up Round 2, you must place the round 2 soul tiles, and train wreck markers (the light colored ones that were left aside during the initial setup of the game) onto the board. The current spirit leader places the three new train wreck markers onto the cities marked with the white train wreck icons (Eagle Mountain, Ophir and Organ).

The current spirit leader is responsible for overseeing the new tile placement. Choose a random method (without looking) to place **one** round 2 soul tile (*not two tiles like in round 1*) in each ghost town and remove any round 2 tiles that have been randomly placed in their home town. Round 2 is now ready to begin. Starting with the current spirit leader, begin the bidding for the new spirit leader.

GAME END

The game ends when the last round 2 train wreck marker has been removed, and everyone has completed all of their movement turns for the current movement phase.

SCORING

Players now add up their scores as follows:

One Point Souls: Soul tiles in the "1" section of your cemetery are worth **+1 point**.

Two Point Souls: Soul tiles in the "2" section of your cemetery are worth **+2 points**.

Angry Souls: These are soul tiles still on board your train at the end of the game. They are angry because they were promised passage home, but were not delivered. **-1 point each**.

Bonuses:

The In-State Bonus: If you have delivered at least one soul to all three towns in a state you earn **+3 points for each set completed**.

The All State Bonus: If you have delivered at least one soul to each of the six different states (or five states in a 3 player game) you earn **+6 points in a 4 player game**, or **+5 points in a 3 player game** for each set completed.

Note: Soul tiles in your in-state sets may be used to make your all-state sets, and vice versa.

Scoring Example:



Here's Blue's ghost train mat at the end of a four player game

One Point Souls Delivered (14)	+14 pts.
Two Point Sould Delivered (3)	+6 pts.
Angry Souls Left on Train (2)	-2 pt.
In State Bonuses (4) (A, B, C & D)	+12 pts.
All State Bonuses (2) (1 & 2)	+12 pts.
For a Grand Total of	42 pts.

WINNING

The engineer with the most points wins.

In the case of a tie, the engineer with the most cards in hand wins. If there is still a tie, then of the players' tied for most cards, the player with the highest total value of cards in hand. If still a tie, then the tied engineers must share the glory.

The winning engineer gets a promotion to dispatcher (*and for one weekend only, ghosts now say "Choo!" instead of "Boo!" in your honor*).

CREDITS

Designer: Morgan Dontanville

Artwork: Kurt Miller

Development, Editing & Layout:
Ron Magin
Cafe Games Limited



Special Thanks to:

Derk Solko & Michael Webb

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