

First Week Playbook

Launch-to-PTO plan for WoW: Forever, Nov 4-16 2026. Companion to `fifth-dreadclaw.md`. Written 2026-10-01 against beta build 1.60.1.70124. Beta facts are dated; re-verify anything marked OPEN before launch. Beta ends Oct 21, so numbers can still move.

Clock

Fact	Value
Launch	Wed Nov 4 2026, 3:00 p.m. PST = 23:00 UTC = 6:00 p.m. EST (DST ends Nov 1)
Your time zone	EST during launch week
Raids unlock	Dec 9 2026 (Barrow Deep 10, Hyjal Summit 20)
Play shape	Light Wed/Thu, Fri evening on, full days Nov 7-8, PTO Nov 9-13, full days Nov 14-15, back to work Nov 16

Pre-launch checklist (do before Nov 4)

1. Own the Skyborne Heroic Pack or higher (\$29.99 minimum). Required for the Skyborne race; base subscription does not unlock it. 2. Name reservation window Oct 27 - Nov 3: reserve **Fifth Dreadclaw** (two-part, region-unique). 3. Install addons ahead of time: Questie (has Forever work in progress), DBM (DBM-Vanilla repo), AtlasLootClassic. Verify interface version 16001 builds on launch morning; beta addons may need a TOC bump. 4. Decide spec keybinds before logging in. Plan is Feral leveling with a healing set banked; see talent map below. 5. Skim the Oct 2 cap-30 beta patch notes (OPEN: may change 1-30 pacing or quests).

Launch night: Wed Nov 4, 6:00 p.m. EST (target: level ~12)

Expected: login queues. Beta feedback says leveling is fast, so don't rush past content; the queue is the bottleneck tonight.

Character creation: pick **High Order (Alliance) at creation**. Wowhead confirms faction is chosen during character creation, not at level 12 (CORRECTION from the character sheet). Skyborne Alliance classes: Druid, Hunter, Mage, Rogue, Warrior.

Zephras Isle flow (1-12, confirmed beta):

- Druid trainers: Xyton Silverwind, Thendall Village /way 41.6 23.4 (to 6), Naeluna Swiftmend, Shen'dar Village /way 45.2 44.2, Lotheluum Starbreeze, Valanaar /way 64.0 75.0.
- At level 5: quest **The Great Outdoors** - /sit at a campfire, then train Cooking and craft a **Basic Campfire** (Simple Wood + Flint and Tinder, both sold by the Cooking trainer). 3 camp-feature slots. Never travel without dropping camp: buffs, repairs, vendors. Train **First Aid** and **Fishing** at the first hub too - all three secondaries are cheap and every one feeds the camp system.
- Skyborne starting mobs hit harder than standard starting zones (beta reports). Thorns up, always.

At 12: skyboat from Valanaar's eastern dock /way 65.9 83.5 to **Dalaran**. Alliance Skyborne hub is Dalaran; its guards are friendly only to Alliance Skyborne (other Alliance races can't use it as a hub yet - OPEN how this resolves at launch). From Dalaran (Alterac), the nearest leveling zones are Hillsbrad/Arathi-side; the classic Alliance route zones (Westfall, Darkshore) are far. OPEN: where Blizzard routes High Order at 12 at launch. Beta players report heading to the usual Alliance zones; verify the quest flow live and take whatever the breadcrumbs give you.

Druid quest calendar (no prompts exist - schedule these)

Beta found zero in-game prompting for druid class quests. Put them on your own calendar:

Level	Quest	Where	Notes
10	Bear Form	Zephras (spirit bear)	Confusing waterfall objective; budget time, don't rage-quit it
~14	Cure Poison	Darnassus	Skyborne chain was bugged (Power Over Poison not triggered after Curing the Sick, Sep 20 report). OPEN: fixed?
16	Aquatic Form	Darnassus	No prompt; go proactively

Level	Quest	Where	Notes
20	Cat Form	Moonglade, "The Great Cat Spirit"	Stealth minigame: 3 idols, avoid patrols. Prowl unlocks outside the cave

Train **2H Mace** at Ironforge (Wo Ping is Stormwind 1H; IF has the 2H trainer)

- beta thread: Str/Agi 2H staves are scarce before the 40s, 2H maces fill the gap.

Talent map (Feral, in order)

Feral core: Ferocity 5, Feral Swifttness 2, Heart of the Wild 3, Savage Fury 2, Sharpened Claws 2, Feral Charge (11), Primal Bite at 25 (16-point milestone), Predatory Strikes 3, Blood Frenzy 2, Leader of the Pack, Predatory Instincts 3, King of the Jungle 3, Rend and Tear. Berserk at 40 (30 Feral points). Resto tail: Furor 5, Naturalist 5, then HotW finish, Thick Hide, Natural Reaction.

Milestones to feel for: Feral Charge at 11, Primal Bite at 25, Berserk at 40. Respec: first reset 1s in beta (temporary), later resets much more expensive - do NOT respec on a whim; the Resto switch is a level-60 event.

Feral combat rules (confirmed beta, Sep 24 dev notes + Wowhead feral guide):

- **Weapon DPS drives Bear and Cat.** Every weapon upgrade is a real upgrade. Keep a current green 2h; refresh at every hub. Level **Feral Combat weapon skill** or forms feel weak.
- Claw + Rip are your only cat damage abilities at 20. Rotation: Rake when available, Claw to 4-5 CP, Rip or Ferocious Bite.
- **Faerie Fire spam feeds Omen of Clarity procs** - add it to the rotation.
- Thorns: maintain always; scales with spell power and snapshots it.
- Wrath spam scales with spell power (buffed ~50% in build 70009, Sep 24). Any +spell power gear early is dual-purpose with your heal set.
- Powershifting is dead (no energy restore). Do not build around it.
- Bear tanking is the easiest dungeon invite. Lead with "druid, can tank or heal" in LFG.

Dungeon ladder (first-clear XP is the engine)

Forever boosted dungeon quest XP ~3x (Wailing Caverns quests: 40k vs 12k in Era) and cut dungeon mob XP to 20%. One first-clear ≈ a free level. Second clears are worthless. Classic dungeons are also re-leveled:

Dungeon	Level	Notes
Hall of Thanes	13-18	Ironforge. First target, Fri Nov 6
Wailing Caverns	15-25	Re-leveled. Embrace of the Viper set - 5 pieces turn Cat Form into a serpent; Serpent's Shoulders
Deadmines	18-23	Re-leveled
Stockade	22-30	Re-leveled
Blackfathom Deeps	24-32	Re-leveled
Excavation Site: Wetlands	24-29	New. Wetlands is a gank corridor - group up, go after
City of Dalaran	28-33 (table) / 20-35 (guide text)	New. You live in Dalaran anyway. Range discrepancy OPEN
Scarlet Monastery GY / Library	28-38 / 29-39	Re-leveled
Razorfen Kraul	30-40	Re-leveled
The Drowned City	35-40	New, STV coast
Krol'dok Stronghold	40-45 (table) / 40-55 (text)	New, Riverglades. Range discrepancy OPEN
Uldaman / Zul'Farrak / Maraudon	42-52 / 44-54 / 45-57	Re-leveled
Alcaz Prison	48-53	New, Dustwallow

Pug etiquette for a feral healer: offer heal first (off-heal throughput at low level comes from spell ranks + Int/Spirit, not talents), tank if no tank. Shapeshifting costs are high in heal gear (beta consensus); stay caster, FF + Moonfire when heals aren't needed rather than cat-weaving.

Fallback: leveling without dungeons

Use this section when either trigger hits:

1. **Queue/tech failure** - dungeons unreachable (no LFG tooling at launch is possible; beta grouped via chat/LFG channels - OPEN). Switch immediately. 2. **Grind fatigue** - pug chaos stops being fun. Switch at any day boundary.

Dungeon first-clears become opportunistic, never load-bearing: take one if a guildmate drags you, skip without guilt otherwise. The quest-only route is the plan; dungeons are a bonus.

Quest-only route

Band	Route	Notes
12-20	Dalaran breadcrumbs into the Hillsbrad/Arathi side; or classic: Westfall+Redridge / Darkshore+Ashenvale	Live quest-flow dependent (OPEN item)
20-30	Duskwood, STV start, Ashenvale finish	Wetlands avoided on principle (gank corridor)
30-40	STV finish + Arathi + Riverglades	Riverglades is the backbone: 150+ new quests built for exactly this band
40-50	Riverglades finish + Feralas / Tanaris / Hinterlands	Krol'dok taken as bonus, not required
50-55	Un'Goro / Felwood / WPL	
55-60	Burning Steppes / EPL / Winterspring / Azshara	

XP levers that replace dungeon bursts

- **Rested XP discipline:** log out at campsites with a Camp Tent (LW tents, anyone's camp) every night. Up to 5% of a level per logout cycle.
- Forever added 1,000+ new quests, and the beta consensus ("leveling is far too easy", 236 posts) is that pure questing is already fast. Dungeon XP is a bonus, not a requirement.
- Herb/Alch stays woven in: questing routes are herb routes; self-supplied consumables keep kill speed up.
- Druid class quests are all outdoor content, unaffected by the fallback.

Adjusted pacing

Quest-only runs roughly 20-30% slower than the dungeon-assisted schedule. Revised end-state: 60 around **Nov 22-25** instead of Nov 18-20, still 2+ weeks ahead of the Dec 9 raid unlock. Checkpoint adjustments: shift each PTO day's target down one row of the day-by-day table (e.g. Nov 10 lands ~28-32 instead of 30-34, Nov 13 lands ~38-42 instead of 42-46).

PvP adjustment for quest-only

More open-world hours means more gank exposure:

- Quest in zones your faction populates; with the expected Horde imbalance, quiet Alliance zones are where ganks hunt, crowded Alliance zones are cover.
- Bank the Thorns + Read Ley Line rhythm every session (ley-line spots on the route, pop after fights).
- Same solo rules as the doctrine section: no elite camps, no AFK in the open, corpse-run forward.

Professions beats

LOCKED for now, Oct 1 2026: Primary **Herbalism + Alchemy** (data-backed; see [wiki/professions/](#) for full recipe data). All three secondaries trained: **Cooking, First Aid, Fishing** (cap is 2 primaries + 3 secondaries; Camping is not a profession and needs no slot).

Secondary	Train when	Why it matters
Cooking	Day 1 (Zephras trainer sells campfire mats)	Campfire feature slots scale with cooking skill: Basic = 3, Journeyman = 5, Expert = 10. Also unique foods (rested XP, profession-skill food)
First Aid	First hub, cheap	Forever moved healing potions here from Alchemy, plus antivenom and anti-bleed. Zero-slot sustain
Fishing	Early, level in downtime	Fish Bowl camp item = +8% stats, best tier-1 camp buff. Contingent upside: if bot bans hold, fish prices spike (Ludy tier-list take, Oct 1)

Why Herb+Alch wins for this character (build 1.60.1.70124, sqlite + nether tooltips + Wowhead druid overview):

1. **Alchemist's Stone** (BoP, Alchemy 275): trinket, "Increases the effects that healing and mana potions have on the wearer by 20%" + doubles as a Philosopher's Stone. The only profession-locked power item relevant to a healer found in the data. 2. **Mixology** (Forever mechanic): alchemists get +25% to elixir and flask effects. Your self-crafted flasks beat everyone else's. 3. **Herbalism passive**: Forever gives herbalists a Magic Resistance buff (Mining gives Health) - permanent survivability on a PvP ruleset. 4. **Death Lotus control**: all four new flasks (Natural Accuracy/Aggression/Precision/Swiftness) need 1x Death Lotus each. You farm the bottleneck herb, control flask supply at raid unlock, and sell the surplus. 5. Self-fed raid-prep loop: herbs -> flasks/potions -> consumes, cheapest craft to level, no AH dependency. 6. **The Enchanting items are purchasable**: Idol of Swiftmend (Swiftmend CD -3 sec) is BoE; Mighty Healing Power 2H enchant is a trade-chat service. Buy both with herb/flask income. Enchanting's real value (the DE bank, Arcane Salvager at skill 140) moves to a future bank-alt - Legacy Points guarantee alts. Also noted: Forever adds Enchanting ring enchants, all purchasable.

Decision table (estimates labeled; see [wiki/professions/](#) for full data):

Axis	Herbalism+Alchemy	Enchanting+Herbalism
Raid-prep self-sufficiency	Full (flasks + potions + Mixology)	Buys consumes
Exclusive power	Alchemist's Stone (BoP) + herb passive	None (all BoE/purchasable)
Week-1 gold	Medium (herbs)	High (DE mats)
Gold at 60	High (flask market)	High (raid gear churn)
Camp slots (with Fishing)	Mana Well + Incense + Fish Bowl	Lute/Incense + Fish Bowl
Leveling cost	~Free	Moderate (DE offsets)

Camping buffs that matter (Wowhead camping guide, Sep 22):

Source	Buff
Herbalism: Incense Candle	+Intellect
Fishing: Fish Bowl	+8% stats
Alchemy: Mana Well	Mana regen
Enchanting: Enchanted Lute	+Armor
Enchanting: Arcane Salvager	More efficient disenchanting
LW: Camp Tent	Rested XP up to 5% of a level
Skinning: Camp Chair	2% crit

You won't have LW/Skinning/Enchanting, but campsites are shared - use other players' tents and chairs whenever you see a camp. Your own slots: campfire + Mana Well + Incense Candle + Fish Bowl (the full three with Fishing).

Profession work beats, woven into travel: pick herbs on every run (druids don't need to leave form to herb in Forever - OPEN: confirm this live, it was a later-era change; if false, it's still low-cost). Bank every green you can't use for a future enchanting alt's disenchant stockpile rather than vendoring (check AH price vs DE value once you know the market). Craft consumables (First Aid) before dungeon blocks, not during. First Aid also makes healing potions and antivenom in Forever.

PvP ruleset doctrine

Eric plays group-focused; the solo rules below are contingency, not a playstyle. On a PvP ruleset, world PvP happens to you even when you don't seek it, so these stay in force:

- Horde will outnumber Alliance at launch on PvP rulesets (orc racial perception + Undead Paladin hype). Assume ganks come in packs.
- Wetlands is a known griefing corridor. Route around or group up.

- Beta PvP was fog/phasing chaos on a mega-server; launch population spreads differently. Expect crowd ambushes anyway near phasing lines and dungeon entrances.
- Travel Form at 30 is your escape button. Feral Swiftess (+30% cat speed) before that. Glide (Walk on Air) off cliffs to disengage.
- Read Ley Line: 100% HP/Mana regen, 2-min CD, **lasts 15 sec with no ley line nearby, 15 min near one**. Learn where ley lines sit on your routes and pop it there after fights.
- Rules when alone: don't grind elite camps, don't AFK in the open, corpse-run forward rather than log out angry.

Gold notes (week 1)

- Don't plan income around leather. Beta skinning is retail-style (everyone can skin one corpse) and 30-40-man skinning raids are crashing the market.
- Sell: early herbs (hot while everyone levels alchemy), surplus Death Lotus if you find it (the flask bottleneck herb), spare potions. Enchanting mats are the week-1 gold engine, but you're not an enchanter: vendor greens only when the vendor price beats the DE value, and stockpile the rest for a future enchanting alt.
- Buy early: bags first, then nothing. Week-1 AH prices on gear are traps. Buy flasks/potions from others only when your alchemy skill hasn't caught up to what you can craft.

Day-by-day targets (provisional - extrapolated past 30)

Beta pacing anchors: 40 hrs casual duo to 20 (Sep 20 forum report); "leveling is far too easy" is the 236-post consensus. Solo feral with dungeon first-clears should run faster than that report. Targets past 30 are extrapolation since the beta cap only reaches 30 on Oct 2. Dungeons here are bonus XP: if queues break or the pug grind wears you down, the **Fallback: leveling without dungeons** section governs and the pace absorbs it.

Day	Session	Target	Blocks
Wed Nov 4	Evening (queues)	~10-12	Zephras + camping unlock
Thu Nov 5	Evening	12-14	Dalaran, first zone, Bear Form quest done
Fri Nov 6	Evening	14-17	Hall of Thanes first clear; Darnassus (Cure Poison)
Sat Nov 7	Full	17-23	Deadmines + Wailing Caverns first clears, Viper pieces

Day	Session	Target	Blocks
Sun Nov 8	Full	23-26	Stockade, BFD, Excavation Site; Primal Bite at 25
Mon Nov 9	Full	26-30	City of Dalaran, start SM
Tue Nov 10	Full	30-34	SM GY/Library, Riverglades entry
Wed Nov 11	Full	34-38	Drowned City, RFK, Riverglades
Thu Nov 12	Full	38-42	Krol'dok at 40, Berserk at 40, mount at 40
Fri Nov 13	Full	42-46	Uldaman, ZF, Riverglades finish
Sat Nov 14	Full	46-51	Maraudon, Alcaz Prison at 48
Sun Nov 15	Full	51-55	Classic 50s content, Shaper's Terrace at 58 prep
Mon Nov 16	Work resumes	55+	60 by ~Nov 18-20, then endgame prep

Checkpoints that matter more than the level numbers:

- 25: Primal Bite online. 30: Travel Form. 40: Berserk + ground mount (Emphyrean Galestrider). 60: full respec to Resto 10/0/41 (see character sheet), Grovekeeper Raiment farm starts.

Anti-goals

- No respec until 60 (respec costs escalate after the first reset).
- No AH gear purchases week 1 except bags.
- No second dungeon clears for XP (mob XP is gutted; quest XP is one-shot).
- No leather-farming income plan (market is crashing on beta meta).
- No rep grinding on the Zephras faction beyond quest flow (beta: the rep zone is a slog; payoff comes later).

Open items (verify before launch)

- Oct 2 cap-30 beta patch notes - anything that changes 1-30 quests, XP, or dungeons.
- Cure Poison Skyborne bug fixed?

- Faction-choice-at-creation vs at-12: confirmed at creation by Wowhead Sep 17; re-confirm at launch.
- Where High Order is routed after Dalaran (no beta data yet).
- Herbalism while shapeshifted: allowed in Forever or not.
- City of Dalaran and Krol'dok level ranges (conflicting sources).
- Addon TOC/interface compatibility on 16001 at launch.
- Confirm LFG/queue tooling exists at launch (beta grouped via chat/LFG channels; if absent, the fallback section is the default plan).

Sources

- Blizzard dev notes Sep 24 (topic 2360696) and Oct 1 maintenance announcement (topic 2367661): us.forums.blizzard.com (confirmed)
- Wowhead: Feral Druid Level 20 guide (Sep 29), Camping Overview (Sep 22), Dungeons Overview (Sep 23), Zephtras Isle Zone Overview (Sep 24), Skyborne Race Overview (Sep 17) (community, client-adjacent)
- Blizzard beta forum threads: Alliance Skyborne Druid 1-20 (2367867), Zephtras questlines (2367113), WC dungeon XP math (2367667), Feral Druid Weapons (2359187), Leveling is far too easy (2353471), Resto druids cat-dps (2368104), Skinning economy (2365519), faction balance (2367063) (player reports, Sep 20 - Oct 1)
- Forever Codex: build 1.60.1.70124, rebuilt Oct 1 2026 (client-derived)

Source: gameplan repo, data build 1.60.1.70124, published 2026-10-01. Beta numbers are provisional until launch.

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