# Tips & Tricks using CASTLEMOLDS Part 24

# Finishing the River Sections

## *Painting the River Bed*

Instructions for building this river bed are on our water cavern building instrucions page.

After painting the floors, the rough river bed may have taken on the **drybrushed colors** of the floor tiles. Since we want the water to **look deep**, we need to paint the **river bed darker**.

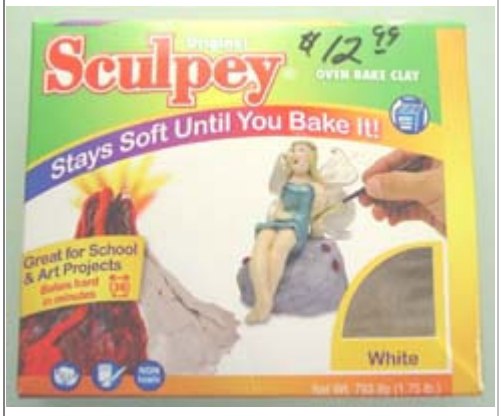
Take the **dark olive drab** color (used for the dark base coat) and **paint the bottom** of the river bed completely with it. If you're wonder what color the dark olive drab is, look at the cavern painting instructions page.


**2.** Put a stripe of **black paint** through the middle of the river. Use your brush to **blend the paint** into the wet olive drab color on both sides. You can do this using a **jabbing motion** with the brush.

Once you blend the paint, you'll find that the **black stripe** down the middle has faded or disappeared and the dark middle is **not as dark** as it should be.

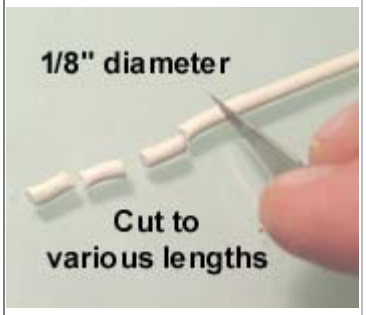
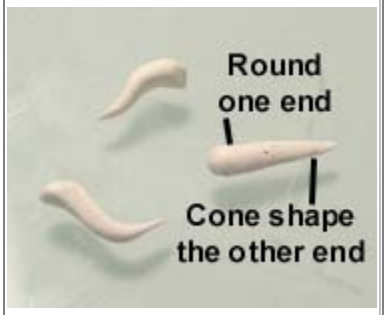
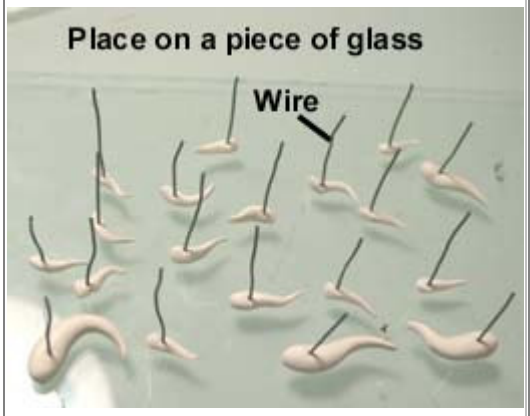
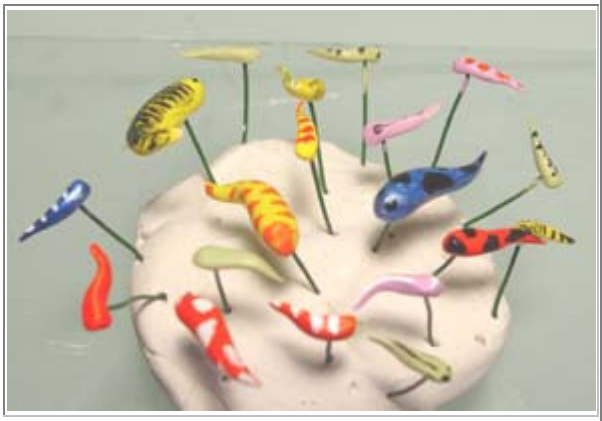

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **3.** | To fix this, **wipe out the brush** and apply more black paint into the center. This time do not blend the black so far to the outsides.<br><br>When finished, the **center will be black**, fading out to the dark olive drab on the sides. |  |  |

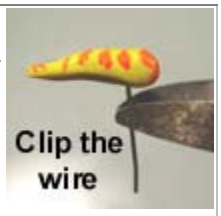
## *Making Tentacles*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **4.** | To make the tentacles and fish, I'm going to use **sculpey**. Sculpey is a **polymer clay** which will not harden until it is **baked in the oven** at 275 deg. F.<br><br>You may also use an **air dry clay** or an **epoxy putty** to make the same items. However, these types of clays may take a long time to cure and the polymer clay I'm using bakes in about 15 minutes.<br><br>Roll several **long thin cones** out of the clay. |  |  |
| **5.** | Place the clay tentacles on your river piece and bend them the way you like.<br><br>Since we can't bake the river piece (the foam would melt) we will have to **put the tentacles on a piece of glass** to bake them.<br><br>I've placed **2 stacked floor tiles** under each tentacle to simulate the depth of the river. This will help hold them in the correct shape while they're baking. |  |  |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **6.** | Once the pieces have cooled, paint them any way you like. I choose to paint them a bright pink fading into a darker purple near the water.<br><br>You can try and **fade the last 1/4" into black** as it touches the bottom of the river. This will help the tentacles look like they're coming out of a deep river intead of just being stuck on the surface.<br><br>**Glue them into place** coming out of the river. Instructions for building this river bed are on our water cavern building instrucions page. |  |

## *Making Fish*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **7.** | The fish are made out of the same **sculpey clay** as shown above. Roll out a **1/8" diameter** bead of clay and cut it into various lengths.<br><br>**Round one end** of the clay with your fingers, the roll the other end **to a point** using the palm of your hand. Finally **bend them a little** so they look like they're swimming. |  |  |
| **8.** | Lay your clay fish **on a piece of glass** for baking.<br><br>Before you bake them, **place a piece of wire** into the thickest part of each fish. I used green floral wire, but you can use any kind of wire that will temporarily support the fish.<br><br>This piece of wire will hold the fish in place when we pour the water in each river section. It's easier to handle if each wire piece is **at least 1" long**. Bake them at **275 deg. F** for 15 minutes. |  | |
| **9.** | After baking the fish, they need to be painted. The **wire helps you hold on** to each fish while you're painting it. After painting, stick each fish **into a wad of clay** to dry.<br><br>I've chosen some bright colors for my fish. I kind of like Koi fish and wanted to simulate some of their designs. Feel free to paint them any wild colors you like, even metallics. |  | |

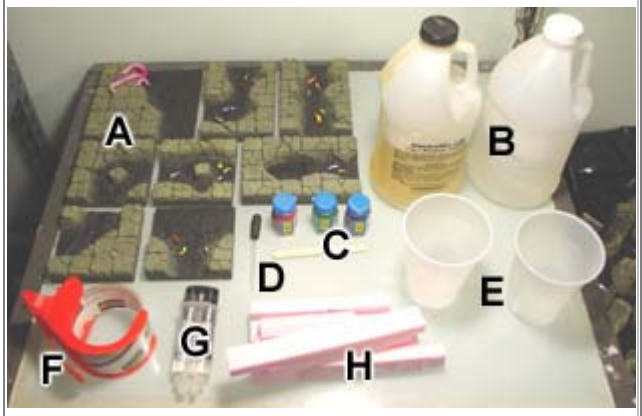
| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **10.** | **Clip each wire** and push the fish down into the foam river bed. If the fish **sticks up above the water**, clip a little more wire off and try again.<br>  <br><br><br>Once you have the height you want for each fish, **glue them down** with a drop of super glue. You may want some fish to be on the very bottom and you may want some fish to have their back sticking up above the water line.<br><br>The last photo shows all my fish mounted down into the river bed. |  |

## *Adding the Water*

Instructions for building this river bed are on our water cavern building instrucions page.

Collect your **(A)** river pieces that need water. To add the water, we're going to use**(B)** Envirotex Lite. It's a 2-part resin used to put a thick layer of varnish on to a table top. You can find products like this at most hardware stores or lumber yards.

You will also need **(C)** red, green and blue ink washes, **(D)** an eye dropper, **(E)** plastic cups, **(F)** packaging tape, **(G)** 5 minute epoxy and **(H)** foam strips about 1" wide x 1/2" thick.



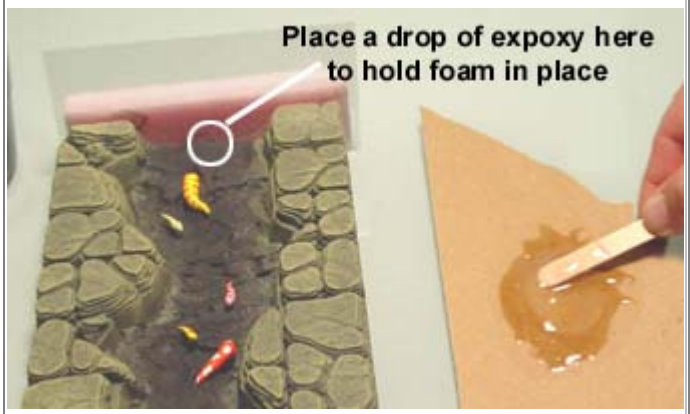

**12.** Get your **strips of foam** and place a piece of **clear packaging tape** on each piece of foam. Try to line the bottom of the tape up with the bottom of the foam.

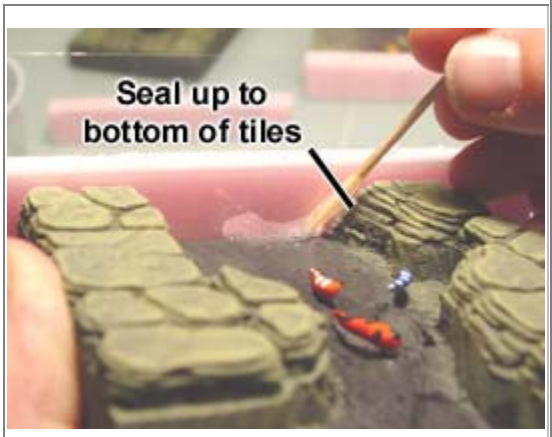
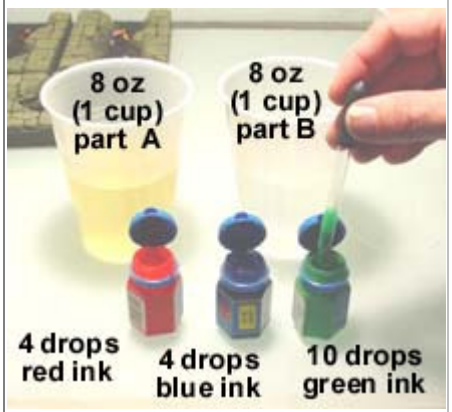
These strips of foam will be used to dam off the ends of each river piece so the water will not flow out. Epoxy glue and the Envorotex water will not permanently stick to the packaging tape.

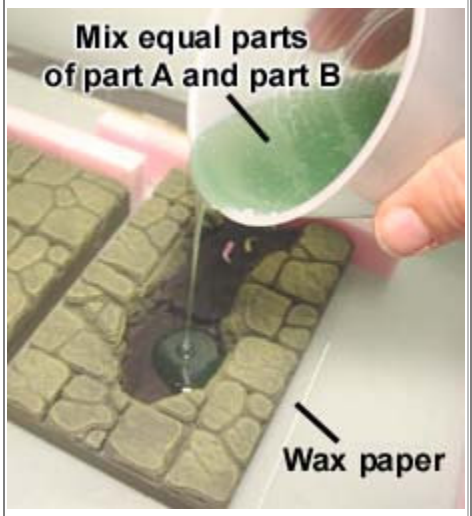

**13.** You will need a **strip of foam with tape on it** for each open river end that needs to be dammed.

Mix up a **small amount of 5 minute epoxy** and put a drop in the crack between the foam and the bottom of the river bed. **Hold it in place** for about 3 minutes until it cures.

Do this for **all of the foam strips**. You can probably do several strips at one time so you



| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | don't waste the glue. | |
| **14.** | For river sections with **many open sides**, you can arrange the foam strips in this manner to close off all sides.<br><br>Be sure the clear packaging tape goes all the way to the **edge of the foam**. Any foam not covered by tape will end up being stuck to the river and the epoxy. |  |
| **15.** | Mix up an new batch of 5 minute epoxy and use a toothpick to **drizzle it between the river bed and the foam dam**.<br><br>Be sure that you **seal the end completely** so that no water will leak out of the river section.<br><br>Since the water level will go **no higher than the bottom of the floor tiles**, you do not have to seal any higher up than that. Seal every river end this way. |  |
| Be sure that your **table surface is level!** If not, your water will flow down to one end and may overflow into areas you do not want it to. | |  |
| **17.** | Using 2 plastic cups, pour **8 oz** (1 cup) of **part A** into a cup and pour **8 oz** of **part B** into another cup.<br><br>Using an **eye dropper**, put **4 drops** of red ink wash, **4 drops** of blue ink wash, and **10 drops** of |   |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | green ink wash into the clear part of the resin.<br><br>Stir completely with a stick. | | |
| **18.** | Place your river sections on a **piece of wax paper**. The river will most likely leak somewhere and it will keep the pieces from sticking to your table top.<br><br>Mix **equal parts** of **part A and B** of the Envirotex Lite. Mix it completely but try **not to mix a lot of air** into it when stirring.<br><br>Pour it into the river section, but **do not fill any higher** than the bottom of the floor tiles. |  |  |

I **strongly suggest** that you make a test piece and try out your river color before pouring your river sections. On my caverns, I also added several drops of green paint to murk up the water (so the fish wouldn't stand out so much).

After pouring the water, I realized that I **couldn't see the bottom of the river**, and all my paint blending was for nothing (as you can see by the photo below). If I could do it again, I would try pouring the test piece using **clear resin with no ink wash added to it** just to see if it looked better.

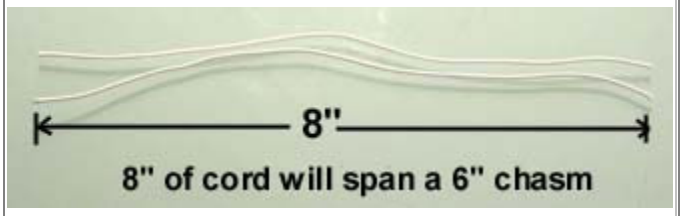
If it was still too clear (and didn't look deep), then I would add half of the ink washes and see how it looked. I cannot stress enough the **need to test your colors** before you put them into the river. Making a couple of extra river pieces to test will give you the best results possible.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **19.** | Let the river sections cure for **at least 6 hours**. Afterwards, you can **snap off** the end blocks. If the river is cured hard enough they will come off fairly easily. If not, then leave them a few more hours.<br><br>You will notice the resin has **creeped up the side** of the tape. This will give you a raised pointed edge when you pop the foam off. To remove this edge, take a hobby knife with a new blade and **trim the edge down**. |  |  |
| **20.** | Once the sharp edge is trimmed, you will have a **dull line** on the ends of your river pieces. To cover this, I mixed up some **5 minute epoxy** and spread it over the surface of the river. Since the epoxy doesn't give you much time to work with it, **do not cover more than 2 pieces at a time**.<br><br>Run the wooden stick |  | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | back and forth through the expoxy to **make waves in the river**. When the epoxy is freshly mixed, the waves will not stay but flow back to smooth. Keep working the epoxy until it starts to thicken up, then the waves will stay. | |
| **21.** | A couple of the cavern wall pieces have pools on them. If you have any Envirotex left over, you can **give the pools** a little drop of it.<br><br>You may want to mix in **a little black ink wash** into a small amount of Envirotex to darken it. Use a small paintbrush handle to drip some into each pool. |   |

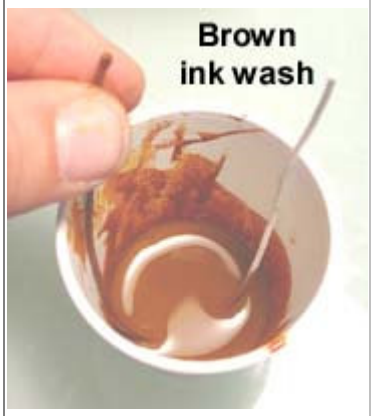
## Making the Plank Bridge

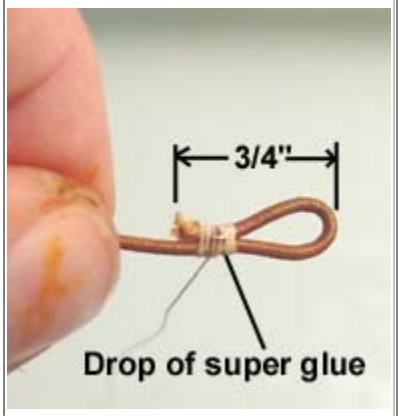
**1.** The bridge ropes are made from **elastic cord**. This is small round stretchy cord you would find in the fabric department at Wal-mart. When planning a bridge, cut lengths of cord **2" longer** than the length of the bridge you want. Since I want a bridge to span a **6" chasm**, I will cut **two 8" pieces** of elastic.




**2.** To paint the cord tan, I'm going to dip it in **brown ink wash**. I poured just enough in a cup to cover the bottom. You can also thin down brown paint but ink wash will put more color into it.

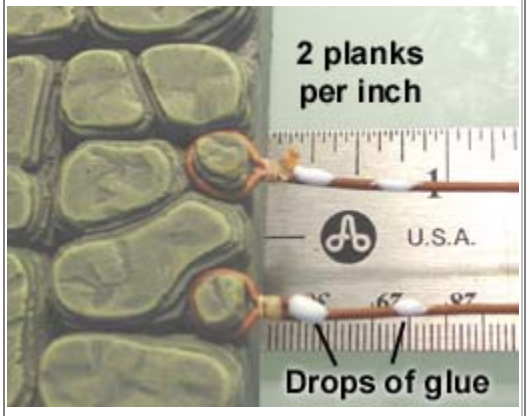
Fold the ends over 3/4" and **wrap the ends** with tan thread. Use a **drop of super glue** to secure the threads. **Use plenty of glue**. The end loops will be stretched later on.

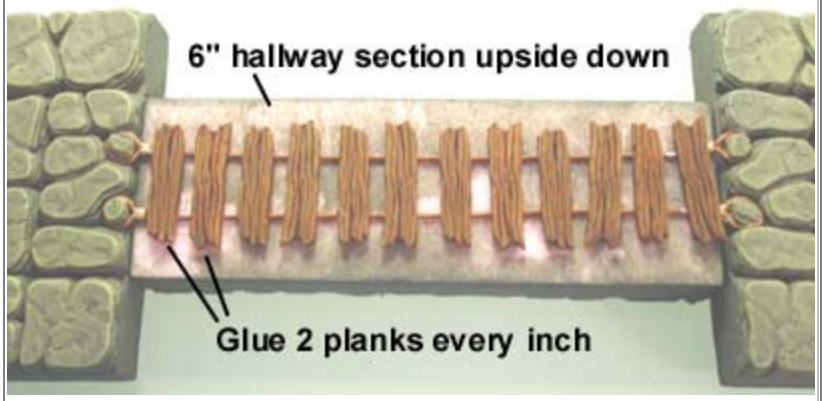



**3.** The tiles that support the loop ends **may be tight** on the sides, making it difficult to stretch the cord around them. Use a hobby knife to **open them up** by chipping away the outside edges.

Wrap the cord

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | around each post end. **Paint the planks brown** and glue **2 planks every inch**. | | |
| **4.** | An easy way to do this is to flip one of your **6" hallway pieces** uside down and **place it between the bridge ends**.<br><br>This will stretch out the cords evenly and give you a firm base to glue the planks against. When dry, remove your hallway piece and the **bridge will be finished**.<br><br>To see how to build the cavern dungeons that go with this bridge, visit our water cavern building instrucions page. |  | |

# Making Crystal Piles

1. You will need **several castings of crystals** from mold #85 and some super glue.

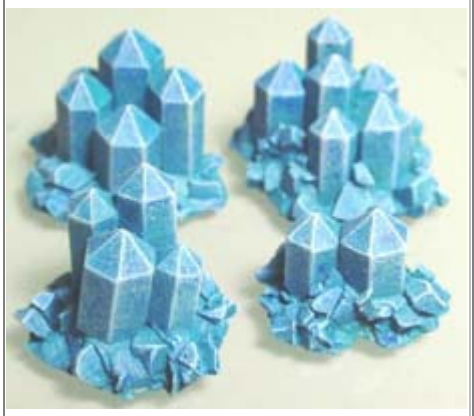
   Use a pair of **wire cutters** to trim the crystals down to different lengths. **Save what you trim off**.


2. Use the super glue to glue the **crystals into groups** of varying height.

   Make some clusters have more crystals than others for variety. Since the crystals are hexagonal shaped, they fit together quite nicely.

3. Take the **left over trimmings** and cut them into small bits using wire cutters. **Wire cutters work better** than pliers, because they cut the scraps into angled shapes rather than crushing the pieces.

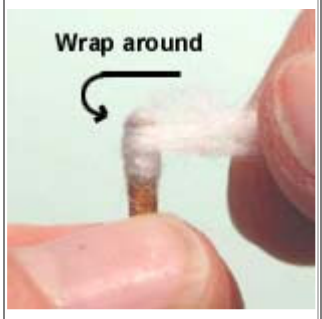
   You will need a **lot of small pieces**, so you

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | might use some **left over plaster scrapings** as well. The photo on the right shows the size of the bits. | | |
| **4.** | Mix up a small amount of plaster and mix it **as thick as soft butter**. Place a **quarter sized** drop on a non stick surface (glass or plastic).<br><br>Press the crystal shape into the plaster, and sprinkle the broken bits around the outside. **Push the broken bits** into the plaster with your fingers to imbed them securely. |  |  |
| **5.** | This step is **extremely important**. You must **spray the crystal with water** immediately or the broken bits will not stick into the plaster. Spraying water will get the plaster to flow around the bits and secure them. Otherwise they will fall off when the piece is dry. |  |  |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | I painted the crystals blue with dry-brushed highlights but any bright color will work. | | |

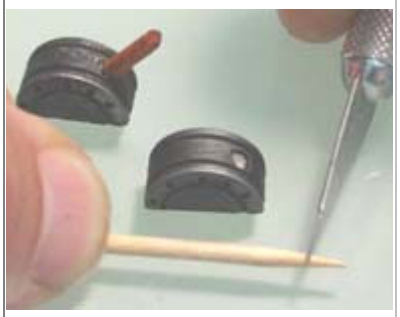
# Finishing Various Accessories

## *Making Torches*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1.** | The torch base is found on mold #85. Paint the base black and dry-brush silver on it.<br><br>Take a **round toothpick** and cut the sharp tip off of it. If the toothpick fits too loosely, cut a little more off the end. **Glue** the toothpick into the base and **paint the toothpick brown**. Cut to the desired length. |  |  |
| **2.** | **Pull off** some cotton from a cotton swab. **Stretch the cotton out** into a 1/4" wide thin strip (as much as possible).<br><br>**Wrap the cotton** around the top of your torch. It works the best if you can get a very long transparently thin strip of cotton. Try and **shape it to a point** at the top. If you do it right, you won't need glue to fix it on. |  |  |
| **3.** | Dip the **whole top** of the torch into **yellow ink wash**<br><br>Dab it on a **paper towel** to soak up some of the excess ink.<br><br>Dip the **tip** of the torch into **red ink wash**. When you stand the torch up, some of the red |  |  |
| | | |  |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | will flow down into the yellow making a nice blend. | | | |

## *Making Levers*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1.** | The lever base is found on mold #85. Paint the base black and dry-brush silver on it.<br><br>Take a **round toothpick** and cut the sharp tip off of it. If the toothpick fits too loosely, cut a little more off the end. **Glue** the toothpick into the lever base, cut to the desired length and **paint the toothpick brown**. |  |  |

Here are two photos of the water cavern layout. For instructions on building the water caverns, visit our water cavern building instrucions page. The miniature figures are from the Descent board game by Fantasy Flight Games. Click on each photo to see a larger version of it.