MEETINGS

Get ready for the year

Take time at the beginning of the year to review the Physical Fitness Certificates and registration forms your parents filled out to review any special needs, allergies or other issues your youth or leadership team may have. Contact parents for more information or advice on how to accommodate special needs where possible; involve parents into your weekly meetings and activities. Think about how this may affect your weekly meetings or any special activities or outings your colony may plan.

Safety

Safety should be the number one priority at any meeting, indoors or out. As a leadership team, review the program to highlight potential hazards and risks, then take action to minimize these. Discuss specific rules of behaviour; Beavers must stay with their lodge or ask permission before leaving the lodge. Explain the rules clearly, and enforce them.

Make certain a first aid kit and Physical Fitness Certificates are available at all meetings. Scouts Canada strongly recommends that leaders take a first aid course. Also, Scouting requires you to have adequate first aid facilities, equipment, and personnel trained in first aid during any camp; people should also know the location of the nearest doctor or medical facility. Check Scouts Canada’s Camping/Outdoor Activities, Section 10000 in B.P.&P., available on the web site (www.scouts.ca), and Scouts Canada’s policies and procedures.

You may want to have special programs dealing with search and rescue, water, fire and traffic safety, but even then, you’ll always require special care and extra supervision when you meet away from the pond.

Dressing for the Weather

We can’t stress the importance of proper clothing enough. Fall, winter or spring, make sure the Beavers are appropriately clothed for outdoor activity. Whenever your programming will take you outdoors for a period of time, make sure you alert parents in advance.

It’s a good idea, at the beginning of the year, to inform parents that impromptu outdoor segments of evening programming will occur regularly. This makes it more likely children will always be prepared and lets your leadership team be more spontaneous.

Housekeeping

You found much of the specific detail about equipment, choice of meeting place and the like in Chapter 4 (Starting Out). It doesn’t hurt to stress again the importance of establishing a good working relationship with your caretaker, as well as other groups that may use the same meeting place. Stick closely to your arrival and departure times to minimize the possibilities of disruption.

Early Arrival

It’s very important for members of the leadership team to arrive at meetings before your Beavers. Use the time to discuss program details so all team members are fully aware of what will be happening during the meeting. If a parent volunteer is helping with the evening’s activities, invite that person to the briefing session as well.

During this period, locate and prepare all the equipment and program materials you will be using.
**Gathering Activity**

With Keeo, be ready to give a warm greeting to Beavers as they arrive. Plan an activity for the gathering time period so your Beavers are involved in programming as soon as they enter the pond. A game which children can join with a minimum of explanation as they arrive is always good; you'll find examples of gathering games outlined in Chapter 13. It’s especially important to closely supervise children of this age. Remember: they’re your responsibility while at the pond.

Start your meeting promptly. If you find some Beavers are always early or late, call their homes to clarify meeting times.

**Physical Set-up**

Familiar routines are very important to Beaver-aged children. They react very positively when they feel secure, and security is fostered when they know where their lodge meets, where equipment is stored, and how to get to the washroom. If you don’t provide structure, you may find your Beavers harder to handle and less cooperative.

**Keeping Things Moving**

Even though attention span increases greatly from age 5 to 7, the Beaver program requires varied and frequently changing activity. How often you will have to change depends upon the mixture of ages in your group, the type of activity, and the degree of the Beavers’ interest. You can help individuals over an interest lapse with active listening and encouragement but, if the leadership team notices even a slight change in overall enthusiasm, move along to a new activity before your present one drags.

Types of games, activities and how they are sequenced makes a difference. Your Beavers will have different energy levels throughout the meeting, as well as other factors such as, how their day was, (i.e. if your meeting is immediately after Halloween and they are on a bit of a sugar buzz), all affects their energy. Where you use active or quiet games, crafts, or a calming song can make a big impact on how smoothly your meeting goes. There may be times when you need to adjust the meeting you had planned; some examples are: when what you are doing isn’t working and the Beavers are not enjoying the activity, taking advantage of opportunities that come your way (i.e. a police officer is in your school that night and would like to drop by and say hello), or something may occur at the location or within the group that requires changes for safety reasons.
Over-programming
Because of the need for frequent change, it’s important to have too many activities prepared for a meeting. Shared long-range planning makes this easier because, if you find this week’s games, songs or stories don’t suit the mood of the evening, you can simply pull a future idea into the program.

Backup Programs
Having one or two back-up programs ready to use is something every colony should be prepared for. You never know when seemingly the impossible may happen; your program isn’t working as planned or something disrupts how the evening was to unfold. Suddenly it looks like your well thought of plan is beyond hope. Have a few alternate "plan B" programs ready. Use the blank meeting template on p. 9-8 and fill a few out. Have some simple crafts ready to go. Put it all in a box that you can grab on your way out the door or store at your meeting place.

Reading Emotion and Interest Levels
This is a learned skill which you’ll develop as you watch and work with your Beavers. Although your instinct may be to introduce a quiet activity to your over-excited Beavers, the results can be disastrous. Perhaps you’ll find it’s more effective to slip an active game into that time slot.

Try not to be a slave to your schedule; don’t force Beavers through an activity simply because the plan says that’s what’s up now. Although encouragement and your own enthusiasm may create the enthusiasm and interest you need from the Beavers, it doesn’t always happen. (See Chapter 6 for more discussion on this topic.)

Just before the closing ceremony, arrange a quieter type of activity. The chance of accidents increases when you send completely charged-up Beavers on their way home.

Keeping Families Involved
Some colonies use newsletters or e-mails, while others put phoning committees to work to inform parents or guardians of special events. All these methods seek to keep communication open between the pond and home. If a lodge leader makes an occasional call to a parent, both leader and parents learn more about the Beaver.
Ensuring Beavers Get Home Safely
Most colonies develop a system with parents about arrangements for going home. Whether each parent meets his or her child, a car pool is organized, or a group of Beavers walk home together, make sure you account for each child. Make it clear to parents that you must be informed if they want to change arrangements. Ensure that Keeo and/or a leader closely monitors the departure of the children; keep your Colony Annual Record Sheets handy so if a parent doesn’t arrive when expected, you can telephone the Beaver’s home.

CEREMONIES
Ceremonies have been a tradition of Scouting programs for many years. For all members, these special activities help create the sense of community, which is such an important component of the Beaver goals.

These moments are especially important to Beaver-aged children because they’re such a new experience. Young children particularly enjoy regular routines, and the familiar cycles like opening and closing ceremonies become anchor points in a sea of new and unfamiliar activities.

The special language and actions of ceremonies also emphasize the magical quality of creative weekly meetings. When you’re visiting another colony, there’s something very inspiring about seeing your Beavers’ faces light up when they hear the call for “River Banks.”

You’ll find detailed descriptions of the opening ceremony, feeding the Beaver, and the closing ceremony in Chapter 8. When preparing any ceremony, remember this basic rule: KISMIF – Keep It Simple, Make It Fun.

INVESTITURE
Leaders
New leaders are invested into Scouting after completion of the orientation component of the Adult Screening process. You can wear the group scarf when you begin working with a section; it is the epauletts that signify investiture. At that time you will receive your Beaver epauletts for your uniform. Any invested leader can invest a new leader.

When it is time to invest Beavers and if your leadership team does not have any invested leaders, consider asking a Service Scouter or another Scouter in your group to do the investiture.

At their investiture, leaders use the Scouter’s promise: “On my honour, I promise that I will do my best to do my duty to God and the Queen, to help other people at all times, and to carry out the spirit of the Scout Law.”

Kits
When a new member joins Beavers, the child becomes a “Kit” – the term used to describe a young beaver. The Kit is placed in a lodge, and may wear the Beaver hat and vest but not the neckerchief.

To become an Eager Beaver, a Kit must know the Beaver Promise, Law and Salute, and the opening, closing and investiture ceremonies.
Invite parents or guardians to participate in the investiture ceremony by standing behind their child when the Beavers receive their scarf. Ask them to bring along the Beaver scarf and woggle. If, for some reason, no member of the family is able to attend, have a leader act as a substitute. Avoid having a Beaver stand alone.

**Procedure**

You can invest one or more Kits at a time because they repeat after the leader the Promise and Law in unison. If only one Beaver is being invested, the leader handling the investiture joins with the child to say the Law and Promise.

The investiture is held at the beginning of the meeting immediately after the opening ceremony. The leader signals all Beavers to take a cross-legged seated position making a “sh-sh-sh” sound. Before starting the ceremony, one of the leaders takes a few minutes to explain to Beavers and parents the importance of the investiture ceremony. Then a leader asks parents to come forward and assume their positions. Parents bring scarves and woggles with them.

The leader asks the children to make the Beaver salute while saying the Beaver Law and Promise. In some colonies, the Beavers turn to face their parents when they say the Law, then turn back to face the leaders as they say their Promise. Leaders then put the Beaver neckerchiefs on the children.

Using Scouting’s left handshake, the newly-invested Beavers shake hands with their leaders and receive their parents’ congratulations before parents return to their seats, and Beavers return to the colony. They can either join the others to sit in dam formation while the colony gives them a cheer, or they can go around the circle and shake hands with all the other Beavers.

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**TAIL CEREMONY, A CELEBRATION OF GROWTH**

All Beavers are presented with tails at a Beaver Tail Ceremony held early in the fall of each year. Only one tail is worn on the hat at a time: any previous tail is removed and may be given to the Beaver as a keepsake.

The primary purpose of the ceremony is to present and receive the Beaver tails, making it a special occasion of its own. The ceremony should be designed to emphasize personal growth and development. It provides an opportunity for each Beaver to be recognized personally in terms of growth and development without being compared to anyone else. The ceremony may include reference to the growth and changes that occur in nature.

With the Beavers, talk about changes like:

- How they listen better when someone is talking
- How they’re trying harder to live up to their Law, Promise and Motto
- How much they have grown
- How they play games with more skill
- How they share more with other Beavers.

The tail celebration includes making new tails, tail group discussions, refreshments and games. Some colonies try to heighten the experience in a variety of ways, including:

- At each tail celebration, Beavers in some colonies construct and decorate new Beaver boxes, which they use to carry crafts and materials to and from home. Leaders and parents comment on the differences between the old and new boxes.
Beavers draw a picture of a scene from *Friends of the Forest*. Leaders bring out the pictures they did while in the last tail group for comparison.

Leaders and parents measure and weigh each Beaver, recording the statistics in a special scrap book. This can be compared to the statistics from the last tail celebration.

Leaders take photos of each Beaver in each tail grouping. These too can be compared and added to the special scrap book.

Beavers themselves sew their new tails on their hats.

*Magic Light Symbol*
A few months before Swim-up, the White Tails may be presented with new tails (white with a magic light) to signify that they will now be preparing to swim up to Cubs. The Magic Light symbol is a silver streak down the centre of the tail. This provides special recognition for those Beavers who will be swimming up, and an opportunity to introduce and discuss the concept of swimming up with all the Beavers.

Although these ideas take a bit of organization and storage space, their impact is very significant.

**SWIMMING-UP**

The Swimming-up ceremony formally recognizes the occasion when a Beaver leaves Beavers and joins Cubs.

In Chapter 8 of the Beaver story, *Friends of the Forest*, you’ll find a description of the transition to Cubs.

Ideally, the movement from one section to another is very momentous. Beaver and Cub leaders work together to make it a successful, meaningful experience for all Beavers involved. Arrange a joint meeting with Pack Scouters to discuss the best way to introduce Busy Beavers to Cubbing.

If more Beavers apply for membership in a Cub pack than the pack can handle, start another pack. Explore the matter with the group committee and Service Scouter.

It’s important to be sure that your Beavers are excited and happy about swimming up to the pack. Remember that the colony has not lost a Beaver; it has produced a Beaver who is about to become a good hunter in the pack. It’s a time for all Beavers to share in the happiness of the occasion.

Leaders may present Beavers who will be moving up to Cubs with the scrapbook of all the material which summarizes their growth in the Beaver program.

Keeo can tell them about the six system, the Cub salute, the Grand Howl and how the Old Wolves got their names from the *Jungle Book*. Keeo can also tell them about the Cub program. (Chapter 7 describes how Keeo can link Busy Beavers to Cubs.) Cub and Beaver leaders decide whether or not to read the *Jungle Book* to the Busy Beavers before Swim-up. Perhaps they will introduce it by reading the first chapter.

Here’s an important detail to remember... Keeo does not instruct the Beavers in the Cub Promise and Law. This important job is reserved for the Akela of the Cub pack.

Finally, invite parents or guardians to attend the ceremony. Ensure they have bought a Cub uniform. On this occasion, the Busy Beavers wear the Cub uniform under the Beaver vest and neckerchief.
Procedure

The ceremony begins with the colony in the river formation, and the pack at ease in the parade circle, leaving an opening facing the colony. Parents of the Beavers who are swimming up are invited to join the ceremony and stand in the position outlined in the diagram below.

When everyone is in position, a Beaver leader steps into the centre of the river and leads the Beavers in the opening ceremony, after which the colony again forms River Banks, as in the diagram. A Beaver leader calls out the names of the Beavers who are swimming up. As his or her name is called, each Beaver stands facing the Beaver leaders (position #1). A Beaver leader says: “Busy Beavers, I hope you will remember your Promise. Once again I ask you to join with me in the Beaver Promise.”

The Beavers reaffirm their promise together: “I promise to love God and help take care of the world.”

The Beaver leader says: “Busy Beavers, we wish you a happy life and a new sharing time as you do your best in the Cub pack.”

The Beavers now shake hands with the leaders and then, escorted by Keeo, walk (swim) up the river formed by their colony, to stand facing the Cub leaders and the pack (position #2). The parents move up to stand behind their child. When they are in position, the lights are switched off, briefly flicked on again to represent the magic light featured in Friends of the Forest, then switched off again. While the lights are off, parents help the children remove their Beaver uniforms (hat, vest). Parents then return to their places and the lights go on.

Akela walks up to the new Tenderpads, shakes their hands and welcomes them into the pack. If the colony uses the Beaver neckerchief, Akela can present the Tenderpads with the pack neckerchief as a welcome. Akela asks the children to make the Beaver salute, then to straighten out the two fingers to make the Cub salute. Akela returns the salute. Introductions should not be necessary because the children have already met the Cub leaders and sixers.

Akela calls the sixers to take the new Tenderpads to their positions in the circle with their sixes. To welcome them, the pack, possibly led by Keeo, does the Grand Howl.

The Grand Howl concludes the Swimming-up ceremony but the evening may continue with a sing-song around the campfire and some refreshments.

If the new Tenderpads have visited the Cub pack several times before the Swimming-up ceremony and Akela feels they are ready, he may choose to invest them into the pack at this time.
Beaver-Cub Link Badge

The Beaver-Wolf Cub Link Badge is a physical link between the Beaver and Wolf Cub sections of Scouts Canada. It is yellow, representing Wolf Cubs, with brown links and border representing Beavers.

If a new Tenderpad was a former member of the Beaver colony, a Beaver leader may be invited to be present at the Cub investiture ceremony to pin the link badge in its proper place on the Cub uniform and congratulate the new Wolf Cub.