Chapter 3

ABOUT BEAVERING

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BEAVER LAW, PROMISE AND MOTTO

For Beaver-aged children, Scouting’s Principles and Mission are rather deep and difficult to grasp. They appear in a simplified and more age-appropriate form in the Beaver Law, Promise and Motto.

Because the Law, Promise and Motto are intended to be used regularly in the colony (i.e. for opening and/or closing ceremonies), they are written to appeal and have meaning to a Beaver.

**Beaver Law**
A Beaver has fun, works hard and helps family and friends.

**Beaver Promise**
I promise to love God and to help take care of the world.

**Beaver Motto**
Sharing, Sharing, Sharing

In Beavering, “sharing” is the major focus upon which all activities are based. Scouts Canada believes the best way to teach young children and give them a chance to begin growing towards fully responsible adulthood is to provide a program in which they can try and experience encouragement and caring in an atmosphere of cooperation and non-competitiveness.

This type of programming builds self-confidence and feelings of self-worth. Through it, Beavers develop a sense of respect and caring for others because they don’t have to meet the added pressures of competition. They don’t need to win status and advancement through badge schemes and similar incentives. They don’t have to strive to meet specific goals.

Competition and advancement schemes are more appropriately introduced in older sections as children grow older and build a strong base of confidence, self-worth and experience.

For Beavers, it’s more important to:
- Try than to achieve
- Experience than to win
- Share than to keep
- Learn to work and play with each other, rather than to pit themselves against each other.

Colony Scouters are expected to model sharing through the idea of shared leadership. Leaders share the responsibilities and accountability, and rotate duties among themselves. *In the Beaver colony, there is no one leader in charge.* However, one leader is designated the colony contact Scouter so one person is readily available by phone to other Scouting people and the community in general. (See Chapter 10 for more information about shared leadership, and how it works.)
BEAVER SECTION GOALS

Each program section (Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, Venturers, Rovers) emphasizes meeting the Principles and Mission at a level appropriate to the age range and capabilities of members in the section. In Beavers, the Program Goals have been purposely selected to correspond with accepted early childhood education and development guidelines. Together, the programs for all sections lead towards the development of the whole person and an in-depth appreciation of and commitment to Scouting’s Principles and Mission.

In the Beaver program, we place emphasis on activities which encourage Beavers to:
- Find examples of God’s love for them and the world
- Experience and express love and joy
- Express themselves
- Be healthy and have good feelings about themselves
- Develop a sense of belonging and sharing in small group activities
- Develop a sense of cooperation through non-competitive activities
- Appreciate nature.

In Beavering, the Principles, Mission and Goals are achieved through using a program of understanding, supportive fun, and activities built around seven program elements: games, crafts, music, storytelling, playacting, spiritual fellowship and outdoors.

SEVEN PROGRAM ELEMENTS

Program elements are useful guideposts for planning a well-rounded program that satisfies the Beaver program goals. Each activity provided at colony meetings should relate to one of the program elements. You’ll find examples of programming ideas in the sample meetings section in Chapter 8. But first, let’s have a brief introduction of the program elements.

Games

Play is a vital part of a child’s growth and development. Most of a child’s learning about who he or she is and how he or she relates to the world occurs through play. Very young children move from a stage of playing alone, to playing near others and, finally (around 4 or 5 years of age), to playing with other children. To help make these early experiences in group play fun and non-threatening, Beavering focuses on activities which emphasize feelings of belonging, sharing and cooperation. Competitive activities are more suitable for older children. They are introduced in Cubbing and become a stronger focus in the Scout section and beyond.

Beavering uses a wide variety of both quiet and active cooperative games to provide fun and an energy outlet. At the same time, these help children learn the basic skills of getting along with others.

Crafts, Music, Storytelling, Playacting

As indicated in the Beaver goals, one of the program’s primary goals involves encouraging self-expression. Beavers provides a place for young children to learn more about themselves. Through dramatic activities such as puppetry, they can try on new roles and identities so important to social development. Crafts enable them to express themselves through the use of a variety of materials. Through crafts, Beavers experience the pleasure of creating a piece of artwork, and the good feelings which result when others admire and encourage their production.

Few activities bring a group as close together as some verses of a favourite song or an exciting story told by a good storyteller. (See Chapter 14 for more information.)
Outdoors
To be able to help “take care of the world” a Beaver must be exposed to, and learn more about, the natural wonders which separate many children from nature’s mysteries. Adults can stimulate their young interest and appreciation for our natural environment with hands-on experience. Through Beavering, children can come to know and appreciate the beauty and fragile nature of open spaces, forests, streams, ponds and wildlife ecosystems in our world.

Leaders can expose Beavers to the facts about nature by telling stories and legends, or showing wildlife films. But the impact on children is far greater when leaders give them opportunities and guidance to experience outdoor activities, such as hikes, picnics, and visits to conservation areas.

All seasons provide a wide variety of opportunities for outdoor experiences. Although taking Beavers out requires extra planning and care, the benefits are immeasurable in terms of helping children better perceive their world. (See Chapter 15 for more details.)

Spiritual Fellowship
The Beaver program works toward the same ideals as the other six Scouting programs. All seek to help young people become well rounded citizens. Scouting is a worldwide fellowship based on the belief in adherence to spiritual principles and human dignity. What is the basis of spiritual fellowship in Beavers? It involves showing children how they can relate to their spiritual principles by the way they treat other people and nature.

This concept is fundamental to the Beaver Promise and Law. Helping others by doing something useful for them is easy for young Beavers to understand. Beaver leaders try to encourage thoughtfulness towards other members of the lodge and colony, brothers and sisters, parents and friends, and people at school or in the community.

The Beaver motto, “Sharing, Sharing, Sharing” encourages Beavers to share themselves, their abilities, their efforts and their joy with others. When leaders set a personal example of honesty, fairness, trust and supportiveness, it provides active examples of how we can all try to live up to our own spiritual principles of caring for others. (See Chapter 16 for more details.)
BEAVER PROGRAM STANDARDS

The Beaver Program Standards (listed here) tie in with the program goals and elements listed on pages 3-2 and 3-3. Scouts Canada has developed Program Standards for each section to help ensure a measure of consistency when delivering programs.

Program Planning

The colony has a:

- Short-range (one month)
- Medium-range (three months), and
- Long-range (one year) program plan which reflects the program goals as outlined in B.P.&P., and/or elements as outlined in the Beaver Leader’s Handbook.
- Weekly programs are typically conducted as described in the Beaver Leader’s Handbook, and incorporate appropriate safety precautions.

Outdoors

Opportunities are provided for Beavers to participate in outdoor activities as often as possible. Beaver minimum standards require:

- One regular meeting per month outdoors
- One weekend outing every two months
- One night at camp annually
- All activities follow Policies and Accepted Practices, as outlined by Camping/Outdoor Activities, Section 10000, B.P. & P.

Youth Input

- Beavers are regularly consulted and utilized, when and where appropriate, in program planning and delivery.
- Small groups (lodges) are used to deliver activities to different aged members which reflects their skills/interests.
- Youth are actively engaged in the creation of their section’s Code of Conduct.

Environmental Awareness

- Opportunities are provided (as often as possible) for Beavers to participate in activities which increase their understanding and awareness of their role in preserving the environment, with the minimum standard being one project/activity annually.
- All activities are conducted in a manner which reflects appropriate environmental awareness and practices.

Spiritual Emphasis

Spiritual emphasis is regularly incorporated throughout the program. Examples may include, but are not limited to:

- Opening and Closing Prayers
- Use of Promise, Law and Motto
- Scouts Own and Scouter’s Five
Community Service

Opportunities are provided for Beavers to participate in community service projects/events as often as possible.

- Minimum standard: one annually.

Membership/Retention

- No youth who is willing to subscribe to the Promise and Law is denied membership (i.e. Scouts Canada does not want any waiting lists).
- Leaders personally invite Beavers back at the beginning of each year.
- Those not returning at any time of the year are contacted by a leader to determine the reasons why.

Linking

Opportunities are provided (as often as possible) for Beavers to interact with Cubs, with the minimum standard being:

- One regular meeting and one other activity with a Cub pack annually.
- Keelo is utilized as part of the leadership team.
- Senior Beavers of swimming up age have at least one other opportunity to interact with a Cub pack.

Family/Parental Involvement

- Parental involvement is encouraged. Opportunities are provided for family/parent involvement as often as possible.
- Minimum standard: four events annually.
- Regular communication occurs to inform parents of program plans and changes through contacts, such as meetings, phone calls, calendars and newsletters, etc.

Training/Leadership

- Scouts Canada expects all leaders to achieve Woodbadge Basic during the first year.
- Scouts Canada expects at least one leader to have Woodbadge Advanced (Beavers).
- At least one member of the leadership team holds a current, recognized first aid qualification.
- The leadership team has obtained the necessary attitude, skills, knowledge and/or training required to conduct outdoor programs, or has recruited a skilled resource person(s) with such knowledge to attend the outing/activity.
- Youth members (e.g. activity leaders, Scouters-in-Training, Keelo) are included as part of the leadership team.

Administration

The following are performed to administer the colony:

- Submit a budget to the group committee for a year’s activities.
- Maintain appropriate financial records, and submit proper financial statements to the group committee.
- Provide an annual inventory of all equipment and property to the group committee.
- Ensure a representative from the section leadership team attends at least 90 percent of group committee meetings.
- Participate in Scouts Canada’s official fundraisers.
GROUPINGS

Beavers have a special place where they meet each week. It’s a mystical place called the pond, where life revolves around special people, ceremonies, a motto, uniforms, and many Beaver terms. These elements all enhance the experience of belonging to Beavers.

You will soon be introduced to a variety of terminology but, to set the scene, we’ll first describe the three main structural groupings in the Beaver program.

The Colony
A colony includes the entire group of Beavers and leaders. Experience shows that the ideal number of Beavers in a colony is 20 to 25. Because of the need for quality and personal interaction between Beavers and leaders, Scouting has also established a policy requiring the leader-Beaver ratio be no greater than one to five. In other words, a colony of 20 should have four adults. Through experience, we’ve learned that having more Beavers and fewer leaders leads to a frustrating and depersonalized experience for everyone.

The Lodge
All Beaver colonies are divided into family groupings (a mixture of ages) called lodges. Lodges are useful for some activities like crafts and discussions, or at times during the meeting when Beavers would benefit from more individual attention.

Lodges are working groups of five or six Beavers and a leader. Beavers usually decide upon a name and symbol for their lodge, and attach this symbol (lodge patch) to the right hand pocket of their uniform. It represents a sign of identification and belonging. (See Chapter 7 for more details about lodge patches.)

Lodges provide a secure home base, especially for younger members of your Beaver colony. At the start of a year, five-year-olds sometimes find being one of 20 Beavers is rather overwhelming. (See Chapter 7 for more discussion.)

The Tail Group
The tail group is another very useful sub-grouping system which you can use to create special program designs. Tail groups are made up of Beavers of typically the same age; so, all five-year-olds, six-year-olds and seven-year-olds form different tail groups. This type of grouping is very practical at different points in your program. It allows you to give older Beavers a different or more challenging activity than younger or newer Beavers.

Beavers receive their tail colour once in the fall. Seven-year-olds (Busy Beavers) may change from a White Tail to a White Tail with a magic light symbol a few months prior to Swim-up. In Chapter 7, you’ll find more detailed information about how to use tail groups, and in Chapter 12, information about tail celebrations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typical Age</th>
<th>Fall Tail Colour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Five-years-old</td>
<td>Brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six-years-old</td>
<td>Blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seven-years-old</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior to Swim-up</td>
<td>White with magic light symbol (silver streak down centre of tail).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Making Tails
Beavers can make their tails with help as needed from leaders and parents. Or, leaders may simply buy tails from their nearest Scout Shop. You can provide five-year-olds with a pre-cut felt tail with pre-punched holes, and help them stitch the tail to their hat. Give six-year-olds a pre-cut tail, but let them punch the holes and stitch. Seven-year-olds often have the fine muscle coordination to handle all steps of the operation.

A Beaver wears only one colour of tail stitched to the back of his or her hat at a time. Tails worn in previous years can be saved and put into a special scrap book, or on a campfire blanket for each Beaver. (See Chapter 12 on tail ceremonies.)
BEAVER TERMS

To set the scene and fuel growing imaginations, Beavers have a special language they use at their meetings. Here are some words to get you thinking in Beaver terms.

Beaver Position
Is sitting cross-legged on the floor.

Beaver Sign
A Beaver sign is a special sign of greeting. Make it as you would a peace sign, but with bent fingers. It represents the two front teeth of a beaver.

Chopping Position
Assume the chopping position by squatting down with elbows on knees, and both hands making a Beaver sign.

Dam Formation
This is a circle formation used for organizing Beavers.

Eager Beaver
This is a Beaver who has learned his or her Law and Promise, and has been invested.

Feeding the Beaver
Feeding the beaver is the act of collecting dues – weekly money that children contribute for supplies or special activities. Procedures vary from group to group.

Grand Tail Slap
Do this by sitting cross-legged on the floor, raising your right hand above your head, and bringing it down to slap the floor in front of you.

Investiture
This is the ceremony in which a Kit is invested (receives a scarf), and becomes an Eager Beaver.

Keeo
Keeo is a Cub who works in a colony. This youth serves as a link between the Beaver and Wolf Cub sections, and strengthens communications between Beavers and the adult leadership team. Keeo is also a member of the leadership team.

Kit
A Kit, both in nature and in the story Friends of the Forest, is a young, growing beaver. In the Scouting program, a Kit is a Beaver who has not yet been invested.

Lodging
Lodging is the name of the closing ceremony (the end of each meeting).

Pond
A pond is the place where a Beaver colony meets (e.g. a church, school, community club, auditorium, etc.).
**River Banks**
This is a formation used to organize Beavers quietly. Beavers stand side-by-side in two wavy lines about one metre apart.

**Swimming-up**
Swimming-up is the ceremony in which the oldest Beavers are transferred to the Wolf Cub program. A Beaver goes to Cubs when he or she is between 7 and 8 years old. The ceremony ties in to Chapter 8 in the *Friends of the Forest* story.

**Tail Celebration**
A Tail Celebration is the meeting in the fall at which the colony officially recognizes that all Beavers have grown older. Beavers make, or are presented with, a new tail to symbolize this growth. Tails are colour-coded.

**Tail Slap**
A tail slap is the name of the opening ceremony (the official start of each meeting). It is also the action of clapping hands behind the back.

**ORIGIN OF THE LEFT HANDSHAKE**
Members of Scouting have a special handshake, for they use the left hand instead of the right. This tradition has its roots in a legend that Baden-Powell heard when he was in West Africa. Two tribes lived next to each other, and they fought bitterly; but at last one of the chiefs dropped his weapon, held in the left hand; he advanced to his enemy and said: “I come unarmed and I hold out my left hand to you as a sign of friendship and trust. We are neighbours and should not live as enemies. From now on we wish to live in peace and we trust you to do the same and be friends.”

At the beginning of Scouting, B.-P. suggested the left handshake (the left hand is also closer to the heart) as a sign of trust and brotherhood. Today, in cultures where it is acceptable, Scouts around the world shake hands with the left hand. It is a sign they are all members of the worldwide Scouting family.

**FRIENDS OF THE FOREST**
This story is the background resource which provides terminology, setting, theme and program material for operating a Beaver colony.

Leaders are expected to use the story for planning initial colony meetings and for weekly storytelling sessions with the Beavers. *Friends of the Forest* is a separate publication available from your local Scout Shop.

*Friends of the Forest* includes a grown-up’s guide. It explains the story, and gives tips on how to present and discuss each chapter with your Beavers.

We’ve included Chapter 1 of *Friends of the Forest* in this Handbook to introduce you to the story. It explains how colony leaders get their names, and introduces concepts like the pond and the tail slap.

Further chapters discuss the Beaver Promise, Law and Motto, the world of Beavers and swimming-up to Cubs.
Chapter 1: Meeting New Friends

Big Brown Beaver had a very important announcement to make. Swimming to the middle of the pond, he slapped his tail on the water three times. Smack! Smack! Smack!

Hearing his sharp signal, all the other beavers in the pond wondered, “What do you suppose is happening?”

From all over the pond, beavers, young and old, swam quickly to Big Brown Beaver. He was such a wise animal, and he knew so much about the forest and the pond. All of the other animals and birds in the forest were his friends.

“Big and little beavers,” Big Brown Beaver announced. “Some people have come to live in the clearing along the river bank. Tic Tac, the squirrel, told me they are called the Jones family. They seem very friendly. When I slapped my tail, they all waved to me. If they are to be our friends, we should go and give each of them a forest name.”

There was much excitement amongst the beavers as they swam from the pond down the river to the forest clearing where the Jones family lived.

At first, none of the Jones family saw the beavers who were quietly peeking over the side of the river bank. Then, one of the taller people finally noticed the beavers’ brown heads and whispered, “I think we have some beaver visitors. Don’t turn around too quickly, or we might frighten them away.”

The other five family members slowly looked around and saw the beavers watching them. With a big smile, one of the people said, “Didn’t I tell you that we would meet new friends in the forest? There must be a beaver colony in the pond near the river.”

The beavers watched carefully to see if they could pick a name that would describe each member of the Jones family. Finally, a loud tail smack from Big Brown Beaver signalled that it was time to return to the pond.

Later, as the beavers sat inside their lodge, they began to share everything they had seen at the clearing. They began to suggest their ideas for forest names for the members of the Jones family.

“Beavers, do you remember the tall person who saw us first?” asked Big Brown Beaver. “He must have eyes as sharp as a hawk’s. Let’s call him ‘Hawkeye’.”

“Oh, that’s a splendid name!” chorused all the other beavers.

Chip and Chatter, the beaver twins, remarked, “When we saw the one who was wearing the clothes of many colours, we thought of the beautiful rainbow that arches over the forest after a rainstorm. Why don’t we call her ‘Rainbow’?”

“Wonderful!” cheered the beavers.
“I saw a person who moved by using a chair with wheels. He seemed very clever to be able to do that,” observed another beaver.

“Then why don’t we call him ‘Ringtail’ since he’s as clever as a racoon,” suggested several beavers.

When the smallest beaver began to talk, everyone became quiet and still so they could better hear each of her words. “One of the people had such sparkling eyes, and when she smiled, her smile made me feel so warm and good inside. Could we name her ‘Sunshine’?”

“Warm as sunshine,” agreed the beavers. “Yes, let’s name her that.”

“And then there was the person having so much fun splashing her feet in the water,” observed one of the beavers. “We could call her ‘Bubbles’.”

“Yes, yes. And don’t forget the one whose hair was the colour of a red fox,” shouted yet another beaver. “He could be called ‘Rusty’.”

And so it was that the pond’s beavers named the people in the Jones family so they could be friends of the forest.

Here’s a description of other chapters in *Friends of the Forest*, and how they might tie into your program.

**Chapter 2: the Beaver Law**

Building beaver lodges in the hall, recreation room, or wherever your colony meets is an excellent program activity. You can build them in dozens of ways (literally). Use your imagination. Keep in mind that it’s important for Beavers to have the fun of building their own lodge. They can gain a great deal of satisfaction from using the simplest materials (e.g. brown paper, burlap, twigs and wood). The end result is not half as important as the playing and working together.

**Chapter 3: the Beaver Motto**

This chapter introduces Beavers to the concept of sharing, which is emphasized throughout the Beaver program.

Keep in mind that sharing means more than simply sharing physical and material things. Whenever possible, teach Beavers that they can share happiness and laughter, the beauty of things around them and the pleasure of being alive. They can share a sound, a story, the fun of a snowball fight, and the feel of a cold winter’s wind or a warm summer’s sun. Sharing brings happiness; it lets Beavers develop a positive approach to life as they begin to understand the rewards of sharing.

**Chapter 4: Keeo and the Magical Light**

Use this chapter to introduce Keeo, a silver beaver. In the story, Keeo is the contact between the beavers and the Jones family. In the colony, Keeo is the contact between the Beavers and the leaders. The position of Keeo is filled by an older Wolf Cub who wears his regular uniform, a silver neckerchief and a Keeo badge in recognition of their special position in the colony.

**Chapter 5: An Invitation for Fun at the Pond**

This chapter introduces the idea of inviting friends to get together. Learning how to be polite and courteous to guests, along with extending an invitation are good social skills to develop. Your colony can expand on this theme by inviting family members or another colony to visit. Multicultural themes also relate to this chapter.
Chapter 6: the Magical World of Beavers
Use this chapter to introduce children to the natural history of beavers and their role in nature. You can also discuss how plants and animals depend on each other, and how people can affect the natural world.

Chapter 7: Remembering the Beaver Promise
This chapter, which is written primarily for leaders but can be read to Beavers, helps everyone become aware that, for the colony to be a success and the child to develop, all members – from the smallest, newest Beavers to leaders – need to cooperate and work together to the fullest and best of their abilities. It is intended as a constant reminder of what Beavering really involves.

Chapter 8: Swimming-up
The Beavering story essentially covers the growing up of a Beaver to when the child joins the Wolf Cub pack. This Swimming-up ceremony is very dramatic in style; it’s a very important occasion in the little Beaver’s life. Keep the actual ceremony simple and quick. Give it an air of fantasy, but not mystery.

Notes