Chapter 10

PLANNING AHEAD

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**PURPOSE AND VALUE**

Effective planning is the key to providing a program which meets the aims of Scouting. It makes the difference between a program which offers no meaningful fun, and one that gives a variety of quality activity and experiences. The Beaver program is not simply a weekly recreational event for children; it’s a well-balanced program that encourages 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
- Appreciate nature
- Develop a sense of cooperation through non-competitive activities.

Scouts Canada’s Program Standards for Beavers (Chapter 3) provides your yardstick for measuring whether a particular activity idea is appropriate for the program. They’re also the tools for evaluating the design of the colony programs.

For example, if you choose an activity for a meeting, and after thinking about it in terms of the Program Standards, find it doesn’t meet any of them, discard it. If, when you look over the activities you’ve planned, you find one of the Standards hasn’t been met, you can insert activities to add balance to the program.

**SHARING THE PLANNING**

In an effort to reinforce the practical and applied benefits of cooperative activity, Beaver leaders use a very obvious shared leadership style. The Beaver-aged child is influenced to a great degree by what we do, how we do it, and how we feel about it. In other words, by the model we present.

**Leaders**

Although group decision-making may sometimes be slow, individual burdens are greatly lessened when responsibility for planning is equally shared. Not only that, but the store of ideas, resources and contacts is enriched and multiplied each time you work collectively with others. Be certain to encourage new members to play an equal part in all planning and programming.

**Beavers And Keeo**

Before we get too carried away with planning, let’s consider two excellent resources.

First and foremost are the Beavers themselves. Because our planning aims to promote and encourage values children can use throughout life, it’s important to involve your Beavers in the process. Ask your Beavers what things they like to do. It’s a great opportunity for a tail group discussion, and to ensure activities remain Beaver driven.

Second, make Keeo a member in the planning process. This young person gives much time and effort to the colony. Recognize this contribution and encourage Keeo’s emerging maturity by involving the Cub in all idea generating stages.
LONG-RANGE PLANNING

One of your main long-range plans as Beaver leaders is to provide programming that stimulates and challenges members, and encourages all of them to participate fully. This becomes increasingly crucial as colonies have Beavers in more mature stages of development. Many leaders are faced with the question of what to do for Beavers in their last season before Cubs. Good long-range planning, which uses special White Tail group activities, has proven the best way out of this dilemma.

Many successful colonies, where leaders tailor some program items especially to different age groups by using tail groupings, have a lower Beaver dropout level for older children. A section on tail groups in Chapter 7 shows how you can plan activities which lead towards the swimming up to Cubs. Good records of past activities help alert leaders to program items which might be new to brand new Beavers, but “old hat” to White Tail Beavers. When you efficiently recycle tried and true ideas for young Beavers, and introduce a few new ideas for older Beavers, you keep all children happy. Sounds like you’ll need a lot of ideas, you say? That’s right, but sit down with a few experienced leaders and their record books at a sharing session, and you’ll be amazed how easy it is to find them.

When you’re feeling overwhelmed by the idea of planning, here’s another trick you can try with your leadership team and Council Service Scouter. Pull out a large calendar and:

- Mark down regular group events (e.g. Beaverees).
- Mark down provincial council events (e.g. Beaver Snow Fest, Day Camps).
- Note investiture, tail celebration and Swimming-up dates.
- Note special days (e.g. Mother’s Day, Father’s Day, etc.).
- Note seasonal special events (e.g. Halloween, Environment Day).
- Note the special events on school calendars.

You’ll see an overall framework develop quickly before your eyes. Use this type of process for setting long-range goals once or twice a year, and supplement it with more detailed short-range planning every few months. Your team will soon have a great program all mapped out.

MEDIUM-RANGE PLANNING

You’ll find additional planning tips in the program building section of Chapter 8, but here are some other ideas.

Short-term planning is very important during the early stages of a new colony’s development. But, once a colony has reached its initial goals of establishing a functioning leadership team and investing its members, it enters the next phase. New colonies in the middle phase of their first year often plan around seasonal themes like Thanksgiving, Remembrance Day and winter holidays. Although seasonal themes provide an adequate framework for one seasonal cycle, the question of repetition soon forces you to explore further planning.

After you’ve outlined the year and generated many ideas, outline each month.

1. Block in the meeting dates.
2. Block in events that will happen during the month.
3. Pick some Beaver generated themes you decided upon in your long-range planning.
4. Discuss and list what you know about the theme or themes:
   - Understandings to be developed
   - Breakdown of topics
   - Suggested activities that interest the Beavers.

This helps leaders see how others on the team are thinking and shows you where to begin.

5. Find out more about the activity. Use all available resources to find the information you need, and to clarify or build up ideas for program activities.

6. Decide upon the objectives of the program. State clearly and specifically how or what you want the Beavers to:
   - Know (fact(s) you want them to learn)
   - Do (activities)
   - Feel (emotions and attitudes you want them to experience)
   - Respond (kinds of behaviours or actions you want to encourage them to develop).

7. Choose specific ideas and materials. This means choosing the right type of movie to see, the appropriate expert to speak, the best equipment, and the most suitable location so that you can provide the best possible experience.

8. Choose methods. Decide how you will present, discuss or act upon information. It’s important to choose methods which provide opportunities for every leader to be involved. Use a combination of the program activities (games, crafts, songs, stories, outings, guests), and develop each activity you choose fully.

9. When developing your monthly programs, use a combination of program elements (the kind of combinations you will discover in JUMPPSTART) to ensure variety in how activities are presented. These elements include music, storytelling, playacting, crafts, games, outdoors, and spiritual fellowship. Use these elements to avoid a boring program and to hold your children’s interests.

**SHORT-RANGE PLANNING**

You’re now ready to prepare detailed plans for a specific time period – a month or a weekend event. Sit down with the entire team to prepare the meeting plan. During this meeting, the team may want to “preview” the theme by doing such things as:

- Making the crafts
- Practising ceremonies
- Learning new songs.

This “practice” prepares the whole team to help implement the activity and ensures that any of them are ready to fill in if needed. At the end of the planning meeting, review the plan to see if your program activities met the Beaver Program Standards. These Standards help you evaluate whether your program fulfills the needs of Beaver-aged children. If your Beavers are having fun, you can bet it meets their needs.

Remember... plan your work, then work your plan, and HAVE FUN!

Wow! You have just completed a planning process. Excellent work. Now share your plan in some detail to the parents of your Beavers. Consider giving your parents a three month overview, and
then more detail for the month you are in. When parents know what is happening, they can be better prepared to help your program work.

**FUNDING**

You’ll have to know about how to finance your colony quite early in your job as a leadership team member. You may need money to pay for books, scarves, games and craft equipment, as well as outings and special events. Discuss this matter with your group/section committee, which carries a major responsibility for funding.

In most cases, money to run the colony comes from weekly dues, proceeds of fund-raising events or the Beavers’ annual membership fees.

The amount all Beavers pay for the annual membership fee is usually set by the next senior council, collected by the committee and sent on to the council. Some committees add an additional amount to the fee and retain it to help cover the expenses of the colony.

In most colonies, each Beaver also pays weekly dues – generally 50¢ week.

Scouts Canada’s national fund-raisers offer an excellent return for your time. Contact your Council office for promotional material, timelines and guidance.

Be sure to check with parents, group committee, sponsor and the council about what type of fund-raising activities are appropriate for Beavers. Although Scouting policy for raising funds is generally applied to all sections, it’s important to use common sense. Common sense says fund-raising activities are unsuitable if they require Beavers to handle large sums of money, carry heavy loads, participate for long hours, travel heavy traffic areas or accept excessive responsibility.

Parents should be involved and help monitor their child’s participation during fund-raising activities.

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**Scoutrees**

**Scout Popcorn**
Fund-raising events are usually approved by the next senior council to ensure they don’t conflict with either local municipal ordinances or the fund-raising policy of Scouts Canada.

In all financial matters, it’s important to consult with the group/section committee or seek advice from the service team representative in the council. You can find further information in the section on finance in the current edition of Scouts Canada’s Policies and Procedures.

Last but not least, it is essential for your team to keep complete records of all financial matters related to colony operations. You must list all income and expenses, and arrange through the group committee for timely reviews and annual audits. Leadership team members may want to alternate this job.

**BUDGETING**

First, try to estimate the cost of operating your colony using a simple budget form, which you can enter or attach to your *Financial Record Book*. Before you can forecast, you must basically know what equipment, supplies, books or uniforms you’ll need, and what outings you’ll take. Your program plan for the year is your source of this information. Once you have it, you’ll be able to estimate expenditures.

The second step is to present your budget to your group or section committee so it can plan necessary fund-raising. Try to do this in the spring for the next program year, or as soon as you can after you get started in the fall.

With your group committee, work out how you will raise funds and what part your colony will play in these plans. In your *Colony Annual Record Sheets*, record the portion of revenue for which the colony will be responsible. Try to keep colony expenses within budget and let your committee know quickly if it looks like you are going to be over your total budget.

**Guidelines**

- With the leadership team, work out your estimated expenses based on your planned program.
- Work out a funding plan with your group/section committee.
- Try to keep your expenses within budget.
- Be sure that one member of the team is keeping track of receipts and expenses in the *Financial Record Book*. Glue an envelope to the inside cover of the record book, and keep receipts in it.
- Report to your group committee regularly, and present your records for auditing.