Chapter 4

STARTING OUT

Starting a New Colony  ▶  Reviving a Lapsed Colony  ▶  Taking Over an Existing Colony
The Pond (Meeting Place)  ▶  Time and Equipment  ▶  Record Keeping
▶ Uniforms  ▶  Constructing Big Brown Beaver
In Chapter 18, you will learn about the leadership team, and the help and support you can obtain from your group/section committee members, sponsor/partner and parents.

There’s still another team ready to help you. It reaches from your colony to the National Office; it includes volunteers and/or professional staff at many levels. They may be called service team members or council executive staff members. Whatever their titles, these members are there to help and guide you when you need them.

Scouts Canada also provides a Help Line (1-800-339-6643 or e-mail pgmhlp@scouts.ca) to help new leaders get started, or to answer questions leaders may have.

The most important source of help is found as close as your local council office. People there can help you get started, such as by arranging a visit with a local colony for observation.

STARTING A NEW COLONY

Before you start a new colony, your service team can take you to visit a colony in action, help you plan your registration night, explain various procedures, inform you of development opportunities and suggest songs, games, stories and more.

Wherever you may live, a key contact person on the service team is usually only a phone call or e-mail away. Contact your local Scout council office to find out who this person is. Keep his or her name, number and e-mail address near; make use of the knowledge and help he or she can give. See Chapter 8 for the necessary steps to take when organizing the first few Beaver meetings.

REVIVING A LAPSED COLONY

With the sponsor/partner and group/section committee, review the colony records and accounts. Recruit and screen new leaders. Arrange for the purchase or replacement of equipment, books, etc., and decide on a meeting night. Ask the group/section committee to phone or send a notice to former Beavers and parents, inviting them to attend a “reunion party.” Provide games and refreshments, introduce the new leaders and outline (in general terms) your plans for the future of the colony.

TAKING OVER AN EXISTING COLONY

If possible, visit the colony with other members of your new leadership team while the Scouters you will replace are still running it. These Scouters can introduce you to the Beavers and, perhaps, you can join the evening’s fun.

During the visit, your team will have the opportunity to see the colony in action. Take special note of routines like the gathering activity, opening and closing ceremonies and feeding the Beaver. How are crafts organized? What about games, songs, stories? Can the leader provide you with a list of the colony’s past activities? Where are other records and equipment kept? Are there special arrangements regarding access to the meeting room (pond)? If you make good use of your visit with the former leaders, you’ll save a lot of time. If possible, make arrangements to work with the existing leaders for a few weeks so they can coach you. Keep the parents in mind. The new leaders can be introduced to them at a parent’s meeting or special event. Carefully plan the initial program (see Chapter 8 on Program Building). Plan an active and diversified program to
develop the Beavers, and build their interest and enthusiasm, but keep it simple and flexible. Be prepared to change items or discard them if you sense they are not appealing to the Beavers. Ask for the Beaver’s opinions, and welcome their ideas.

**THE POND (MEETING PLACE)**

Keep the following details in mind when choosing a pond.

**Size**

A multi-purpose school room, a small gymnasium, a church basement, a hall or a community club is a good size. If the room is too large, your Beavers will have more room to wander and be more difficult to organize. Other factors to consider include: access to bathrooms, a source of water for clean-up, accessibility for special needs such as a wheelchair and possible use of kitchen facilities.

**Type of Floor**

Beavers are often messy when doing handicrafts; few caretakers appreciate glue, crayons or paint on their floors. Several large pieces of plastic sheeting or newspaper will help solve potential difficulties. Similarly, ensure your Beavers wear proper shoes on gym floors.

**Cupboard Space**

If cupboard space is available for colony equipment, it’s a great help to leaders. If no space is available, look for a large trunk which can be stored somewhere within the building. This will save transporting regularly-used items each week.

Make sure you have a firm understanding about the day and hours of the meeting. Check with your group/section committee, the sponsor/partner and the caretaker of the building you’re using. The agreement should provide for either exclusive rights to the time period and place, or sufficient advance notice of changes. Make sure you also know what equipment you may use, what you can hang on walls, which entrance and washrooms are available and whether you are required to turn off lights, sweep floors, etc. Check the location of fire exits, and develop an evacuation plan in case of fire.

**Time**

Some colonies meet in the afternoon after school or on Saturdays, but most meet on weekday evenings from 6:00 p.m. or 6:30 to 7:15 or 7:45 p.m. Be consistent about time and place; it’s essential with children of this age, and only fair to parents. Set expectations that parents will drop-off and pick-up Beavers promptly, or make you aware of other arrangements.

Sixty to 75 minutes of actual program time is generally a suitable length for a colony meeting. Preliminaries and tidying up after the meeting may add half an hour for the leaders.

**Colony Equipment**

You need equipment to run the colony. If you don’t already have it, make it a priority to gather together what is best suited to your needs and the activities your Beavers enjoy.

Here’s a basic list you may want to gather. You can get by with less, of course, but it’s nice to have a good supply.

**First Aid**

First aid equipment appropriate to Beaver activities should be provided, and personnel familiar with its use should be available. Physical Fitness Certificates completed by parents should be close at hand.
A first aid kit should be accessible at all meetings and contain such items as an antiseptic wipe, bandages, adhesive strips, scissors, safety pins, gauze pads, band-aids, cotton balls, large arm slings, paper towels and disposable rubber gloves. These can be kept in a small, carry-along, plastic tub.

Familiarise yourself with the First Aid Kit Usage Log and Emergency Plan found in Camping & Outdoor Activities, Section 10000 in B.P.&P.

Big Brown Beaver
All colonies should have a Big Brown Beaver mascot. Big Brown Beaver is used in all ceremonies. Be creative and design your own, or follow the pattern at the end of this chapter.

Games Box
Fill an old suitcase or trunk with anything that might be used in the assorted games Beavers play: volleyball, nerf ball, bean bags, cards, board games.

Dress-up Box
Fill your dress-up box with discarded clothing, hats, shoes, and other odds and ends, which Beavers can use for dressing up games, skits, plays or charades.

Craft Box
This box provides initial supplies for the handicraft part of the program. In the ideal situation, you will also have a separate box for each lodge, containing enough scissors, glue, paint, tape, etc., for everyone. This minimizes the need to organize prior to craft time. You can obtain many items of equipment free, borrow others, and have Beavers bring some. Your group/section committee will supply a few major items, or they may be purchased from colony funds.

Make sure colony members are aware of their responsibility for looking after the equipment, and putting it away after each meeting.

Flag
Many colonies have made their own flags showing Big Brown Beaver and their colony number. A standard flag is also available from your local Scout Shop. See page 4-7 for Flag Etiquette.

Lodge Decorations
You can make decorations to identify the lodges, which are the Beavers’ home bases in the pond.

The Caretaker
Arrange for leaders and the group/section committee chair to meet with the caretaker to discuss the latter’s duties with respect to colony meetings. Beavers and leaders may offer to tidy up after each meeting and help the caretaker prepare the room for another organization. Help of this kind, and an occasional expression of appreciation for the caretaker’s work, usually ensures a good cooperative relationship.

RECORD KEEPING
As a new colony leader, focus your attention on the essential information you’ll need to have:

- Your Beavers’ Physical Fitness Certificates and attendance
- Your weekly program activities
- Other useful information.
The Colony Annual Records Sheets are available from Scout Shops. It’s a handy document which helps you keep these important records together at your fingertips, as well as other important information such as names and numbers of resource people, service team contacts, libraries, and a list of reference books and magazines.

The Financial Record Book is also available from Scout Shops. Use it to make budgets, keep monthly financial records, and produce a year end income statement for your colony.

Chapter 5 contains more information about administering your colony.

UNIFORMS

Beaver
The Beaver uniform is blue and brown. The colours symbolize nature; brown for the earth and the beaver’s fur coat, and blue for the clear sky and the fresh sparkling water. (See Chapter 7 for more discussion on colour significance.)

The official uniform for Beavers includes:

- Coby hat in blue and brown, with Beavers Canada crest
- Brown vest with blue pockets, Beavers Canada strip on the top edge of the left pocket and coloured lodge patch on the right
- Blue neckerchief or group neckerchief worn cross-over style
- Neckerchief slide
- Group, Area or Council and sponsor/partner emblems and service stripes are worn as directed by Scouts Canada’s Policies and Procedures.

Teach your Beavers at the very beginning to respect their uniform and to wear it proudly. After individual Beavers are invested, encourage each to wear the full uniform.

Other items worn on the uniform include the registration flash (positioned below the Beavers Canada strip on the vest), and the Beaver tail (attached to the back of the hat). Also, an appropriate emblem identifying their ethnic background can be worn by groups that are essentially of one ethnic background. Refer to Scouts Canada’s Policies and Procedures section on Multiculturalism in Scouting.

Leader
The uniform for Beaver leaders is the regular tan shirt or blouse, blue slacks or skirt, and Scouts Canada national neckerchief.

With the uniform and the approval of the group/section committee, Beaver leaders may also choose to wear a group neckerchief or, if qualified, the Gilwell neckerchief with the Gilwell woggle as a slide.

Young leaders registered in other sections, and serving as activity leaders or Scouters-in-Training, should wear the uniform of their section.

Keeo wears the Cub uniform and a special silver scarf with the Keeo badge sewn at the tip.
Beaver Uniform

Approved for wear [by Council Commissioners] in November 2005. Implemented May 2006 and available in Scout Shops for those youth and adults registering in 2006/07, 2007/08. Those members may wear the 2007 emblem as long as they are members of Scouts Canada.

Design, type and colour of lodge patch to be determined by lodge members

Beaver Leader Uniform

Approved for wear [by Council Commissioners] in November 2005. Implemented May 2006 and available in Scout Shops for those youth and adults registering in 2006/07, 2007/08. Those members may wear the 2007 emblem as long as they are members of Scouts Canada.

Approved for wear (by Council Commissioners) in November 2005. Implemented May 2006 and available in Scout Shops for those Adults who have received Kings' Scout/Queens' Scout, Chief Scout, Queens' Venturer, Award Recipients - Placement of Special Badge as a youth member.
CONSTRUCTING BIG BROWN BEAVER

Materials
You will need: tracing paper or heavy paper for the pattern; pencil; ruler; scissors; straight pins; 1 metre of brown fun-fur material (1 metre wide); 45 cm x 60 cm brown felt, plus scraps of pink, white and black; fabric cement; old nylons and cotton batting for stuffing; sewing thread to match materials; and two black shank buttons.

Enlarge Pattern
Copy the pattern onto paper ruled in five centimetre squares. Cut half-patterns, indicated by broken lines, on the fold of double thickness. Add a 0.75 cm seam allowance around all pieces, except those cut from felt.

Instructions
1. Cut two bodies and two underbodies, reversing the pattern for the second body and underbody. Cut four ears, and one head gusset of brown fur fabric. For each ear, pin two pieces together along curved edges with right sides facing. Sew them together, then turn the ears right side out.

2. Pin the head gusset in place on both sides of the head, matching A and E. At cross lines, insert the ears between the gusset and the head on each side, matching open edges of the ears to gusset seams. Sew seams A to E on both sides of the head. Cut a slit for a mouth at the broken line on the pattern.
3. Sew body seams together from F to D.
4. Cut teeth from white felt. Fold them in half where indicated, and glue them together to add stiffening.
5. Cut a mouth from pink felt; at the dotted lines on the mouth, pin the tuck and sew across.
6. With teeth turned to the inside (right side of material), pin the mouth in the opening.
7. Using back stitches and double thread, sew the mouth into place around the edges.
8. With right sides together, pin underbodies to body sides, matching letters on both sides. Sew from D to C on both sides.
9. Sew the centre underbody seam, leaving 14 cm open at the bottom.
10. Turn the beaver right side out. Stuff it carefully, making sure the whole animal is firmly packed. Oversew, closing with double thread.
11. Cut a slash in the centre of the teeth to make two teeth with a space between.
12. Cut a nose from black felt. Bring the side corners together, and whip-stitch. Stuff the nose lightly with cotton batting; glue it into place above the mouth.
13. Sew buttons at the dots in the pattern to make eyes.
14. Cut two tails from brown felt. Cut one from cotton batting, approximately 12.5 mm smaller all around. Pin felt tails together with a cotton layer between. Leaving a 5 mm edge, stitch all around the tail. To quilt the tail, stitch seven rows on the diagonal and seven rows across the diagonal. Sew and glue the tail to the bottom back of your beaver.

**CANADIAN FLAG ETIQUETTE**

The white square represents our great land. The red borders represent the sun rising and setting in the oceans, reminding us of our motto “From Sea to Sea”. In the centre of the flag is one maple leaf, the official emblem of our country, depicting unity; as well, it is a symbol of valour and sacrifice.

Our national flag is a symbol of Canada and identifies our country throughout the world. It is natural, therefore, that Canadians will wish to treat the flag with the respect that such a symbol deserves and will expect others to do the same. For the same reasons we should treat the flags of other countries with similar respect.

**A few customs are:**
1. When the flag is raised, one customarily stands.
2. Officially the flag is flown only in daylight hours, with the exception of ships at sea.
3. It is raised at sunrise and lowered at sunset.
4. No flag is flown above the national flag.
5. The flag is never used for advertising purposes.
6. The flag is used as a drape only on a casket or in the unveiling of a monument. It is not used as a table covering.
When you fly two flags, they must be on separate staffs of the same height. The Canadian Flag should fly to the left of the Colony flag when viewed from the front. When you fly three or more flags, the Canadian Flag should take the central position.

When flags are mounted flat on a wall, hoists should lie at the top left corner as you face them.

## FLAG RAISING AND LOWERING

Preparing a flag to break at the top of the staff has been a traditional method used in Scouting for many years and is done as follows:

Tie with loose halyard and raise to top of staff. At the appropriate moment a simple pull on the loose halyard releases the flag, following which both halyards should be secured. When the flag is “broken”, a colony should stand at attention and salute with the Beaver sign.

When the flag is lowered, it should not be allowed to touch the floor or ground, but be gathered up in one’s hands. At the lowering of the flag, the company again stands at attention, removing any headgear, but NOT giving the Beaver sign.

Some colonies open their meetings with a flag break, which is often followed by a few moments of silence or a prayer; and they end the meeting by lowering the flag, and finally repeating the Beaver promise together, or offering a brief prayer of thanks for fellowship and fun.

For more information on the Canadian Flag, consult:
http://www.pch.gc.ca/progs/cpsc-ccsp/etiquette/index_e.cfm

---

Notes