USING THE OUTDOORS

Scouts Canada believes that the outdoors provides an ideal setting for personal growth and recreation, and that responsible citizenship imposes upon us all an increasing duty to live in harmony with our natural environment. Because of this, outdoor activities are an essential part of all Beaver programs.

In this chapter we encourage you to regularly include outdoor activities in your program as required by Scouts Canada’s Beaver Program Standards. Become familiar with the information on camping & outdoor activities in the current edition of Scouts Canada’s policies and procedures. It provides Scouting policy and procedures for safety, supervision and appropriate activities. There you will find all the forms and applications as they relate to Beaver activities.

CAMPING

For detailed policies and procedures, we recommend you familiarize yourself with B.P.&P.:
- Section 10000 (Camping & Outdoor Activities – policies and procedures)
- Section 10000 (Additional Leadership Requirements for Camping and Outdoor Activities)
- Section 4000 (Requirements for Section Leadership).
- Section 20000 (Various forms used when conducting activities)

OUTDOOR MEETINGS

There’s a general maxim in Scouting that says it’s better (where practical) to be outside than inside. Therefore, consider holding some of your colony meetings outdoors. It’s just as easy to play games, do crafts, sing songs, learn nature lore and follow a spiritual theme outdoors as inside, and you have a chance to do something different. As a bonus, your Beavers will be in the fresh air with lots of room to move around.
Here are some general tips for an outdoor meeting:

- Plan the meeting carefully so that the Beavers are involved in a game or activity all the time.
- If you’re planning an outing away from your regular meeting place, make sure you inform parents. In some circumstances you will require a permission form. Refer to Section 100000 for form use.
- Invite parents to attend with their child(ren). You need a ratio of at least one leader for every five Beavers, as well as additional parental help. See Section 3001 in B.P.&P for the screening process of adult volunteers.
- Know the area you are taking the Beavers to, and make sure it is reasonably safe. Check for broken glass and other dangerous objects in the play area.
- Before the meeting, tell your Beavers what sort of behaviour you expect of them.
- Keep a first aid kit available for accidents.
- Parents are responsible for transporting or arranging for transport of their children to and from Scouting activities.

**OUTING IDEAS**

Our list of outings listed below includes just a few ideas. Read Chapter 10 on planning and, with your leadership team, talk and jot down other ideas which come to mind. Although some may seem far-fetched, after you’ve given them some thought, you may find they’re possible after all.

### Pedestrian Safety

Statistics from the Canadian Red Cross Society show that car accident related deaths involving pedestrians is the highest cause of death for children aged five to nine. You will be doing a great service to your Beavers by running a program that shows the proper way to cross the street, recognizing traffic signals, walking in a parking lot and other pedestrian hazards. Contact your local police station for tips and resource help.

### Beaveree

This day program is essentially an inter-group, area or Council event. Mutually planned by participants, it usually includes activities such as games, crafts, special programs (e.g. parachute play) and picnics. Some area/councils build this into a weekend campout and include parents/families.

### Winter Klondike Day

 Celebrate winter with a day outside in the snow. Although you need to be careful about proper clothing, energy foods, and the mixture of activity and rest, it can be a great deal of fun. Again, something like this is often an inter-group event featuring snow games, treasure hunts, sculptures and lunch in an igloo – things Beavers love.

### Make Maple Sugar

Is there a sugar bush near you? A maple sugar-making event is often sponsored by local conservation authorities. Look into it.

### Cookouts and Hikes

This type of activity need not be complicated; besides, it’s relatively simple to organize. Ensure that what you plan is not too challenging for Beaver-aged children.
Visit to A Wildlife Sanctuary

With or without a resource person, Beavers and leaders can see and learn much.

Sensory Awareness Trail

If you have such a trail in your area, give it a try. If not, think about developing a simple trail close by. Perhaps your group’s Scout troop would be interested in helping.

Animal Tracking in Winter

This might be a good tail group activity – perhaps something special for your White Tails. Locate and try to identify animal tracks in a local conservation area. Follow them to try to discover where the animals live and what they eat. Finish with hot chocolate around a small fire or back at the lodge.

Water Slide

Here is a great summer fun idea. Invite another group to join you. All you need is a large long piece of plastic, a hill and a source of water (preferably a hose) to keep the slide wet. You can use a bucket system if you don’t have a hose, but it gets tiring because Beavers can slide for hours.

HIKING

Beavers love to walk in the woods or across a field, and a hike is an excellent day outing. Keep the distance short – no more than a kilometre or two. Because Beavers are curious, they will want to stop, look and explore. Ensure you have enough leaders along, and have planned the activity well. Here are some guidelines.

A hike has a:

- Destination
- Purpose
- Plan (distance and stops)
- Game to spruce it up.

Use hiking often as a way to travel, means of observation and an energy outlet. Keep in mind that the object of a hike is to explore and discover. This will prevent your hike from turning into a forced march.

Some Hike Ideas

- Message following hike (like a treasure hunt moving towards a goal).
- Progressive supper hike (moving from home to home).
- Conservation or nature hike (use it to collect things such as an item for each letter of the alphabet). Teach Beavers to choose fallen items so they don’t damage trees and plants by tearing away living parts.
- Observation hike.
- Rock finding hike. Find coloured rocks or different kinds of rocks. Display them later by setting them in plaster of Paris.
Hike and listen. Listen for nature voices, then describe what you hear.
Historic hike (through an old building or settlement).
Parent and Beaver hike.

**Hike Planning Steps**
1. Set a goal. What do you want to achieve?
2. State the type of hike.
3. Establish a time. How long a hike will you take?
4. Establish a route, and check it out. Choose a start and end point, and clear instructions on how parents can get there.
5. Outline the program for group committee approval prior to the event. Include:
   - Safety considerations
   - Date, time, etc.
   - Equipment list
   - List of help needed
   - Budget (group committee’s consent)
6. Make sure you inform parents. Obtain their written permission for their child to participate in category 3 activities using the forms found in Section 20000 in B.P.&P.

**SPECIAL EVENTS**
- Visits to senior citizens; adopt a grandparent; make a gift
- What is your job like (guest speaker)?
- Trick night
- Develop a cooking course. This might involve making a bagged lunch, candied apple, soup, cookie night, bake a cake night
- Christmas concert
- Parent/Beaver banquet
- Scout-Guide Week activity
- Carnival night

**PLANNING TIPS**
You need organization, planning and coordination to make any of these events happen. With the help of some experienced leaders and/or your Service Scouter, you’ll find the job easy. This checklist of reminders will also help.

**General Notes**
Ensure all your Beavers are registered, and that you have a copy of the Program Participant Enrollment form for everyone. These should be kept close at hand at meetings and outings.

Wear uniforms on outings whenever appropriate. It makes Scouting visible and helps identify any lost Beavers.
Preparations
Contact the place of interest by mail, e-mail or phone and ask for all the information they can supply: admission price; availability of guides; number of people they can accommodate; time required for the tour or activity; crests or souvenirs suitable for Beavers and their cost; washroom and lunch facilities.

Estimate the total cost of the outing, and include everything in your budget (see Chapter 10).

Inform parents by letter at least two weeks before the outing. Include: destination; meeting place and time; length of outing; cost; request help with supervision; parent consent forms to be signed and returned with money to the next meeting. Remember: it is the parents responsibility to drive or ensure their child gets to the event.

Collect money and parent consent forms.

Call those who have not brought in forms and money by the final meeting before the outing.

Build up the Beavers’ enthusiasm by planning at least one meeting around the outing theme. Explain to them what you expect of them in terms of behaviour. Tell the parents what the Beavers are to bring (warm clothes) and what Beavers cannot bring (Game Boys™, Walkmans™, etc.).

Prepare name tags for each Beaver, including name, address and phone number. Children should wear the name tag inside a jacket or vest pocket for leader reference.

Prepare maps with directions for drivers.

Confirm arrangements for reservations a few days before the trip.

Day of the Outing
Ensure leaders are on time at the meeting place.

Put name tags on Beavers as they arrive.

Provide drivers with maps, and indicate exactly where at your destination they should meet.

Remember to prepare some activity to fill possible lulls in the day. Although most leaders schedule a half hour for lunch, it only takes some Beavers 10 minutes to eat. Carry a travelling first aid kit with the colony or lodge.

After the Outing
Have Beavers send out thank you cards to people who helped with the trip. This isn’t just good manners, but it also makes it easier for the next group.

Hold a follow-up meeting where you remember what you did and saw. Why not show slides or pictures taken on the trip?

Assess the success of the trip. How did the Beavers enjoy it? What program goals did it meet? What can be done differently for next time?
Here’s a way you can make a checklist to help ensure everything that needs to be done is completed. When you plan for an outing or special event, think of the specific things you need to do before, during and after the activity. List them in the centre of a page of paper. On the left hand side, write the date when the task must be completed. On the right, write the name of the person who will do it. As each item is completed, put a check mark beside the date. The leader who has taken on the job of coordinating the outing can be responsible for the checklist. (See Chapter 5 for sharing responsibilities in the leadership team.)

These suggested questions may help you develop your own checklist. Consult the Camping & Outdoor Activities, Section 10000 in B.P.&P. for policies, forms and applications.

- Note dietary and medical considerations that appear on the Program Participant Enrollment form of those participating.
- Have you confirmed the use of the location?
- Do all participants and parents have information on date, time, cost and program?
  - Have you clearly stated all costs? Do you have parents’ permission? Have you asked for their help and cooperation?
- Does your group committee approve of your program?
- Have you completed all the required forms?
- Do you have a theme for the day? Is everyone informed?
- Will you use costumes?
- Have you listed and obtained all supplies?
- Have you asked for extra support from Scouts or Venturers?
- Is there a first aid kit available, and is someone knowledgable in first aid?
- Are bathrooms available and open? Who has the key?
- Who is responsible for meals?
- Do you have an alternate plan in case of bad weather?
- Is parking accessible?
- Do you need direction signs? If so, who will make them?
- Will you have a lost and found? Who will be responsible for it?
- Have all organizers (parents, leaders) been fully briefed before the event?
- Will other family members be present? What will they do?
- Have you planned to evaluate the event? How?
- Will you make recommendations for the next organizers?