

Preparing for Adventure: Building a 6-Week Programme Cycle

This resource aims to assist Scouters in Beaver Scout Colonies to effectively plan exciting programme. It is based off the concept of youth empowerment: giving Beaver Scouts themselves a proper and meaningful say in what they wish to do.

Suggestions within this resource- organised under three simple steps- aim to give you and your Scouter team ideas by which you can ensure that programme cycles are based off the ideas your Beaver Scouts provide.

This resource may be seen as a follow-on from the 'First Six Weeks' resource that aims to suggest methods with which the Colony can be introduced to the concept of the Fox Lodge, SPICES, the cloth map, the Beaver Scout Adventure book and the memory bag. Please refer to said resource if

It is hoped that these resources combined help the Scouter in providing a Scouting year that at its core contains child-centred, SPICES-based, quality programme.



Stage 1: Preparing to plan

While it is essential that Beaver Scouts are central to planning their own programme opportunities, it may be important for the Scouter team to meet before the planning session and investigate whether there are any upcoming group, county or national events the Colony is to attend or national initiatives it is partaking in.

If there is an activity already planned, are there any preparations the Colony must undergo? For example, if Group Camp is approaching, Beaver Scouts may need to practise pitching tents at a weekly meeting beforehand. Perhaps Beaver Scouts have already planned to go on a hike in a few weeks' time and therefore they may need to practise packing a day bag, reading a simple map, etc.

Beaver Scouts must be enabled to plan around such parameters- this can be done simply through making Beaver Scouts aware of what preparations need to be done. Conn Beaver Scouts could be encouraged to guide discussions such that necessary preparations are included in ideas formulated by the younger members of their Lodge.

The Scouter team should also be in agreement with the methods with which the Colony will do their planning. Will they use the map, book or bag? Will there be pictures or objects to inspire them? Will they meet in Lodges or a big group? Who will record the plan- are the Conn Beaver Scouts up to the job? Who is going to guide discussions?



Stage 2: Input from Beaver Scouts

Bearing in mind the age of the Beaver Scouts in the Colony, Scouters should aim to facilitate a planning session that:

- is concise and 'snappy'.
- does not involve Beaver Scouts sitting passively for long periods.
- allows ideas to be listened to on a level par with other ideas.
- contains clear goals and some sort of 'end point'.

Beaver Scouts may feel disappointed that their idea of going to the lake, etc. has not been taken on. To prevent this, the Scouter team may choose to set parameters around what can or can't be done, or around what type of activity they are planning. Such markers should be set down early, for example:

We already have a camp coming up that we need to prepare for.

Any outings we go on during these six weeks need to be low cost.

We agreed last week that our focus would be on cooking backwoods, etc.

Listed in the following pages are sources of inspiration that Beaver Scouts may get their ideas from. Scouters should encourage ideas coming from different sources, but at the same time should ensure that the sheer amount of sources is not too overbearing. Limiting sources of inspiration will prevent confusion and aimless discussions that don't have an end in sight.



Stage 2: Input from Beaver Scouts

Where can Beaver Scouts get their ideas from?

Beaver Scouts can get inspiration from some or all of the following methods, and more besides!

Past adventures

Ruarc and Conn Beaver Scouts recall activities they have partaken in from years previous. Example: *Let's go back to the lake in the park where we had our picnic. Maybe we could build mini boats this time.*

Reviews of past activities

Recorded Log Chews or Lodge Discussions should be brought out and recommendations implemented if applicable. Example: *Last time we went hillwalking, we said we wanted to hike in an area with more trees so we could build shelters.*

Beaver Scout Adventure book

Beaver Scouts can be inspired by images in their Beaver Scout Adventure book. You might choose to have the whole Colony choose one image or theme from the book. Example: *Wow! Forest Life- Catapults! How can we use our pioneering skills to make our own fun catapults?*

Content of Memory Bags

Beaver Scouts check their memory bag from their most recent adventure which inspires discussion. Example: *I put a bandage in my bag to remind me of the time I took care of my friend when she cut her finger. Can we learn some more emergencies skills soon?*

Stage 2: Input from Beaver Scouts

Where can Beaver Scouts get their ideas from?

Fox Lodge characters

Beaver Scouts may use their knowledge of the Fox Lodge characters (or indeed, some might recognise the SPICES symbols or SPICES words themselves) to help plan their programme. Example: *I would like to go on an adventure that would use all the skills Zena has. Should we try making an obstacle course?*

Adventure Skill requirements

Conn Beaver Scouts might be aware that they need to meet certain requirements in a particular Adventure Skill. Example: *We need to make sure we can do everything in Emergencies Stage 2 for our Chief Scout Award. Can we practise making bandages and slings?*

Lodge Discussions

Beaver Scouts could meet in their Lodges to generate ideas before a whole Colony discussion. Example: *The Bear Lodge said we would like to learn to roast marshmallows safely around a fire.*

Interest from outside Beaver Scouts

Perhaps a Beaver Scout has done something in school/ in an extra-curriculum activity/ with friends that he or she might like to try with the whole Colony. Example: *In Lego Club, we built houses for our minifigures. I'd like to try building a giant one in real-life in the forest!*

Special occasions

Beaver Scouts may get inspiration from upcoming special occasions such as Hallowe'en, Christmas, Chinese New Year, Diwali, etc. Example: *Easter is coming up in a few weeks' time- how about we combine our hike with an Easter egg hunt?*

Stage 3: Putting it all together

It may be the case that a supplementary meeting of Scouters is needed after Beaver Scouts come up with ideas. At this meeting, Scouters can formally formulate the six-week programme cycle. The Colony may have time to slot their ideas together in a large group, but unless managed properly, this may be tedious to younger Beaver Scouts especially. To prevent boredom, and to allow Beaver Scouts to still participate in Scouting programme during the meeting, the Scouter team should aim to slot ideas roughly into the six weeks and 'fill in the gaps' where necessary at their Scouter meeting.

The gaps to be filled by Scouters may include Adventure Skills requirements that have not been discussed with Beaver Scouts. Likewise, time for schemes such as Special Interest Badges, Messengers of Peace awards, Chief Scout Awards, etc. should be factored into the cycle. Scouters may need to investigate whether bookings for activities need to be made and also factor costs into final plans.

SPICES objectives can aid Scouters in ensuring activities fulfil a purpose and that a well-rounded programme is promoted. They can be applied to different outings or activities and shared with Beaver Scouts. Indeed, they may be the basis for planning for the Beaver Scouts themselves in the first place.

It is a good idea to share the 'filled gaps' plan with Beaver Scouts at the next weekly meeting so they can see their ideas come to life.



EXAMPLE 1: 123rd Mayo

The 123rd Mayo Beaver Scout Colony are having a planning session at their weekly meeting. The Scouters have provisionally made their availability such that they are available for a day activity at the weekend of the fifth week of the programme cycle. Apart from this, Beaver Scouts have free rein over planning their programme, with little input from Scouters. After Lodge discussions where Beaver Scouts used a variety of methods to come up with ideas, Lodge Leaders from each Lodge give their Lodge's feedback back to the whole Colony. Zuzanna, a Conn Beaver Scout, records the feedback on a giant sheet in the middle of the hall, with help from the Scouters when needed. The ideas were as follows:

The Snake Lodge

- The Conns said they would like to revisit the (expensive) amusement park they visited two years ago.
- Jack and Vani want to learn more First Aid.

The Bear Lodge

- Having looked through the book, the older Beaver Scouts want to try building a go-kart.
- There is an argument amongst many Beaver Scouts who aren't interested in car or go-karts.

The Dolphin Lodge

- All really eager to try building a big catapult. Didn't get around to talking about anything else.

The Tiger Lodge

- Lodge Leader has become distracted as he is last to report and can't remember what the Lodge had discussed. No contributions as they weren't written down.

As you may have noticed, this planning session seems to have been wasted. Beaver Scouts have suggested a mish-mash of ideas. The below plan is not detailed enough- especially for difficult activities such as building a go-kart, something that most of the Colony were not eager to do anyway. There is no linking of activities within the cycle. Nobody in the Colony had discussed going up to Big Hill, yet it is scheduled by the Scouter as the Beaver Scouts weren't guided to think of an outing that was free of charge.

Date	Activities
Week 1 1 st February	Building go-karts.
Week 2 8 th February	Walk to the gates of Oak Park- go in if gates are open and if time allows.
Week 3 15 th February	We will go outside if the weather is nice.
Week 4 22 nd February	First Aid. See if we can get all Beaver Scouts to Stage 1 or 2 Emergencies.
Week 5 1 st March	Building a catapult.
OUTING 4 th March	Hike up to the Big Hill. Picnic and tracking signs.
Week 6 8 th March	Play some games.

This cycle is inconsistent, incoherent, lacking necessary detail and only slightly based on the plethora of ideas the Colony suggested. The Scouter team know that next time, they need to be more involved in scaffolding and guiding the discussion amongst the Beaver Scouts.

EXAMPLE 2: 50th Antrim

The 50th Belfast Beaver Scout Colony are having a planning session at their weekly meeting. Annual Camp has been scheduled for five weeks' time in a local campsite. The Beaver Scouts have voted on which picture from the Beaver Scout Adventure they are using as a stimulus: 19 voted for 'Warrior Training', while 5 voted for 'Making Music'. They are therefore using the 'Warrior Training' picture (below) as their stimulus. The whole Colony are gathered together as a big Log Chew to plan the next few weeks leading up to camp. The Conn Beaver Scouts are recording the ideas on post it notes and grouping similar ideas together on a big board. Some of the discussions includes:

- Katya wants to do gladiator fighting using giant sticks!
- Mercy and Layla want to make a ballista.
- Darragh is very competitive and challenges everybody to try beat him in an obstacle course.
- Eoin suggests making bow-and-arrow sets. Harry agrees, and asks is there a place for archery on the campsite they will be going to.
- Alex is worried that she doesn't know what to pack for camp as it's her first time.. and she and her friends doesn't know how to pitch a tent!
- Charlie is upset because he really wanted to do 'Making Music'- he loves making instruments out of recycled materials at home.



After some discussion, the Colony has agreed the following programme in the few weeks leading up to camp. Scouter B draws up a quick schedule, which she adds details to before sending to her Scouter team so everyone knows what is planned.

Date	Activities
Week 1 24 th April	Charlie to start SIB on making instruments- making plan with the support of Scouter A. Conns ask other Beaver Scouts what they would like on their ideal obstacle course. Beaver Scouts begin to practise pitching tents- starting indoors and only putting in poles.
Week 2 1st May	Beaver Scouts brainstorm what they should pack in an overnight bag. Beaver Scouts practise packing bag and ‘stuffing’ sleeping bag into its sack. Stage 1 Camping requirement- pack own bag.
Week 3 8 th May	Local archery club visiting Beaver Scouts to talk safety and basic skills before camp (if Scouter C can book). Beaver Scouts continuing to practise pitching tents- outdoors this time with pegs.
Week 4 15 th May	Conn Beaver Scouts plan what materials they need to source for building obstacle course on camp for younger Beaver Scouts. Bag check for all those camping- can Beaver Scouts repack bag themselves?
Week 5 22 nd May	Beaver Scouts use pioneering skills making gladiator sticks from bamboo, rubber bands and pillows that they will bring on camp. Beaver Scouts review arrangements for camp.
ANNUAL CAMP 23 rd -25 th May	Camp themed as ‘Warrior Training’. Activities include pitching tents, obstacle course, ballista pioneering, gladiator fights, archery, campfire. Charlie- showing off home-made instruments at campfire and is awarded Skill Special Interest Badge, if achieved. Brief review on Sunday morning before going home.
Week 6 29 th May	Full review of camp. What went well? Did we do all we planned? What ideas do we have for our camp next year? Planning for next six weeks, which includes County day.

Conclusion

As you can clearly see from the examples, 50th Belfast's plans seems much more achievable, realistic and firmly based off the ideas of their Beaver Scouts. The preparation for camp is integrated well alongside the 'obstacle course' / Warrior Training strand, with a clear end goal of everything coming together for the camp at the end of Week 5. A review in Week 6 is included, which should start off the planning process for the next cycle very smoothly.

In the case of 123rd Mayo, the Scouter team know they must go back to the drawing board and find a system that works for their Colony and ensures an outcome that results in a well-planned programme based off guided discussions with their Beaver Scouts.

The final message of this resource is attempt try suggestions contained herein that may suit your Colony at a local level. Just like we expect the Beaver Scouts to do, the Scouter team must plan, do and review their chosen planning process themselves and make changes by the next programme cycle planning session, if required.

Questions that may prompt discussion amongst Scouters include:

- Was our last programme cycle fleshed out?
- Were there enough activities to keep Beaver Scouts interested?
- Did our planning system encourage Beaver Scouts to give their ideas, or did it simply reinforce what we the Scouters had actually already half-planned?
- Did the plan come together well? Were there too many things going on?
- Were the Beaver Scouts aware of their 'end goal'?
- Did we achieve the SPICES objectives/ Adventure Skills requirements, etc.?