

# Outdoor Beaver Meetings

1<sup>st</sup> Stonewall – Manitoba Council

**Critical Shift:** Sections have increased capability to conduct outdoor meetings year-round.

## Our Story:

Scouter Michelle took over the Beaver Colony this year and had noticed a lack of youth returning. Their Colony had lost 10 Beavers due to the program being primarily craft-based and lacking in variance and outdoor adventures. After taking in feedback from Scouting families that the program wasn't holding the youth's interest as intended and realizing that most Beaver-aged youth don't often get outside for adventures in the colder darker fall and winter seasons, Michelle took it upon herself to make incorporating the outdoors a regular part of Beaver programs, and use the colder, darker seasons of fall and winter as an opportunity for the Section to work on exciting outdoor winter skills.

## The Problem:

- Many youth were not returning year after year.
- Families of Beaver Scouts indicated that they did not like the program being focused on crafts and would prefer to spend more time outdoors.

## Our Solution:

- Recognizing the Beavers' interest in being outdoors, the Scouter made it her mission to meet outdoors regardless of the weather.
- Revitalizing the Beaver program into one that is outdoor-oriented, conducting majority of Section meetings outside.

## How It Works:

- The youth build a new respect and appreciation for the outdoors,
- Retention and youth satisfaction increase.
- The youth enjoy a stronger adventure-based program meeting nearly entirely outdoors, even during the fall and winter in Manitoba weather!



## What Success Looked Like:

- Increased satisfaction in the program with Beavers and their families reporting that they are enjoying the program more than when they were indoors.
- Getting creative when it comes to transitioning traditional programs to the outdoors to be able to do all activities.

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## Give it a Try!

### Step-by-Step

1. Talk to your Scouting families to see if this something they and their youth would be interested in.
2. Find an appropriate outdoor space. It's fine to start by just meeting outside your normal indoor space.
3. Consider how you will handle things like weather, access to bathrooms and the dark.
4. Help parents and youth understand how they can be as successful as possible. Learn about layering and staying warm in cold weather, as well as helping parents find the gear they need (the dollar store can be a great source for cost effective warm clothes).
5. Move your meetings outside gradually. Start during warmer and lighter evenings and continue into the winter, or start by holding part of your meetings outdoors, gradually staying outside for longer.
6. Consider what parts of your program may be harder to do outside. Think about how activities can be modified so that they can be done in an outdoor environment.



### Check out our Activity Finder

<https://www.scouts.ca/resources/activity-finder.html?location=outdoor>

Did you know that the Activity Finder can show you activities that can be done outside? Here are some fun things to try at your next outdoor meeting.

### What Do I Need?

- A positive attitude! This can be a big change for many Sections, and a can-do attitude will make a big difference.
- Get creative with how activities can be modified to be done in an outdoor environment.
- Patience – it may take time to get youth and Scouting families on board, so be prepared to move outdoors gradually.

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