

A Guide to Organising a Special Interest Showcase

The Special Interest Showcase is an initiative that aims to increase uptake of individual Special Interest Badge projects in Beaver Scout Colonies.

We suggest Beaver Scout Colonies organise a 'Showcase' that allows Beaver Scouts to show off their newly-gained skills to other Beaver Scouts, Scouters and, perhaps, parents at a specially-organised event.

To make this initiative as easy to understand as possible, we have broken down this guide into five simple steps:

Step 1: Set your Special Interest goals

Step 2: Plan the Showcase

Step 3: Work on your Special Interest

Step 4: Host the Showcase

Step 5: Celebrate and reward



Step 1:

Set your Special Interest goals

Special Interest Badges are designed to reward Beaver Scouts with their efforts in areas they are interested in that may take place outside the normal sphere of Scouting. They are split into five areas: Skill, Physical, Adventure, Community and Environment.

For this initiative, we recommend Beaver Scouts partake in a project/ challenge that aims to earn them a 'Physical' or 'Skill' Special Interest Badge.

Challenges related to Special Interest should:

- challenge Beaver Scouts to learn or develop skills.
- help increase Beaver Scouts' knowledge of their interest.
- contain a practical element which could benefit others.

Beaver Scouts should design **an individual challenge** with basic objectives to meet and timeframe for completion in conjunction with their Scouter(s). Beaver Scouts may have an interest they would like to pursue further such as playing a sport, playing a musical instrument, computer programming, etc. The Scouter's role is to help the Beaver Scout design an appropriate and relatively achievable challenge within some type of timeframe as, again, this should be an individualised challenge.



Step 2:

Plan the Showcase

The next part of this process- after helping to plan individual projects with Beaver Scouts- is to put plans together for the 'Showcase' element.

Think of the Showcase as a sort of non-competitive talent show whereby Beaver Scouts can show off what they have achieved as part of the Special Interest process. For example, if a Beaver Scout's aim for earning their badge was improving their football skills, perhaps they could perform a few 'keepie-uppies'. If their project was to work on improving their art skills, perhaps they could set up a mini-display of their work and talk about some of it. Perhaps cakes made by a Beaver Scout as part of their project can be served as a refreshment?



Poem recitals, instrument-playing, magic tricks, gymnastic demonstrations... all this and more can be part of the Colony's Showcase!

Step 3:

Work on your Special Interest

While plans for the actual Showcase event come together, Beaver Scouts should be working on their Special Interest projects in their own spare time in order to achieve their objectives.

It may be a good idea to provide a copy of the Beaver Scout's objectives and timeframe for their project to the Beaver Scout themselves so they and their parents/ guardians know what they are aiming towards. This is, after all, a key component of Scouting- Plan, Do and- at the end of the process- Review!



There should be a timeframe of at least two weeks before the Showcase so that the Scouter can 'check up' with the Beaver Scouts and how their projects are going at a weekly Beaver Scout meeting.

Step 4:

Host the Showcase

After weeks of Beaver Scouts individually working on their Special Interest project, the big day has finally come! Parents have been invited, refreshments have been prepared and now it's SHOWTIME!

Again, the format of this Showcase is in your Colony's hands. You may choose to have your Showcase as a portion of your weekly meeting, or perhaps as a special weekend event. As long as the Showcase highlights individual efforts and celebrates the fantastic achievements of the Beaver Scouts involved, your Showcase is sure to be a success.

The National Beaver Scout Team has set the week beginning 20th November 2017 as a week in which you may like to host your Showcase. If this does not allow enough time for your Colony to prepare, feel more than free to host the Showcase(s) during a different week during the year!



Step 5:

Celebrate and Reward

Reviewing and assessing is an essential component of the Special Interest cycle. The emphasis for achieving the badge should be on the **process** and not completely on the product.

Is there anything about their project that the Beaver Scout found more challenging than they initially thought? Did they encounter any problems in the process and, if so, how did they overcome them? What have they learned from the process that they can bring to their next Special Interest project? Ideally, these questions, or variants thereof, should be asked of participants as part of the Showcase.



The great thing about the Special Interest Badge process is that there is something tangible for the Beaver Scout to see at the end: the badge itself. The badge should represent hard work and achievement and should be celebrated. The badges are earned, not just simply given out. It would be a great idea if badges were presented to Beaver Scouts in front of parents and other Colony members. While Beaver Scouts are still celebrating their achievements, they may be inspired right there and then to begin their next Special Interest project!

Review

What went well during the Special Interest Showcase?

Would any Lodge member like to try to earn another SIB?