



Introduction to the Otter Program (pilot)

The Otter Raft

A Section of the Scouting Group aimed at youngsters aged from 5 to 7 years. The Scouter-in-charge of the Raft will be the Otter Leader and he/she will be assisted by Assistant Otter Leaders. Parents may also be called upon to assist.

The maximum number of Otters permitted in one Pack is 32 (4 dens of 8 Otters each).

The Den

The Raft will be divided into a number of Dens, each Den to consist of a maximum of 8 Otters but preferably not more than 6 Otters. The Otter in charge of a Den is called a Den Leader and he/she is assisted by an Assistant Den Leader.

Where there is an outstanding Otter who is in the later stages of the training scheme then he/she may be appointed as Raft Leader. This is a similar position to a Senior Sixer in the Timberwolf Pack. The Raft Leader will assist the Otter Leader. The Den will normally be the working unit.

The Group

The Group will consist of one or more Sections but will not be thought to be complete until all Sections possible are fully operating. A complete Scouting Group will consist of:

-  An Otter Raft;

-  A Timberwolf Pack;

-  A Pathfinder Troop;



A Rover Crew.

The Scouting Group will be in the charge of a Group Scouter and each Section of the Group will have a Section Leader with Assistants.

The Group Council

This will consist of all the registered Scouters in the Group and this Council will, under the guidance of the Group Scouter, deal with all matters affecting the training of the Group.

The Group Council is responsible for determining what requirements are necessary to carry out its' duties, and the views of the Group Council are put to the Group Committee by the Group Scouter.

The Group Committee

The Group Committee consists of a Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary, representatives of the Sponsoring Authority and parents, supporters and friends of the Group.

The main function of this Committee is to support the Group Scouter to efficiently run the Group.

The main task is the raising of finance for equipment and normal running costs of the Group.

Uniformed, Warranted Leaders do not take on the roles of Officials of the Group Committee. They may, subject to the Group's own desires, sit on the Group Committee but should not take an active part and should be acting in an advisory capacity.

To put a halt to any hint of a conflict of interest, Parents who are also Scouters in the Group may not sit on the Group Committee in any capacity.

Raft Parents

These are either Instructors (of any sort) or assisting parents who are allocated to supervise a particular Den and in some cases to actively participate in and encourage the Den to do its' best in activities of whatever description.

This is not to take away from the Den Leader any responsibility but to act as a normal parent would to his/her family, which is what the Den is meant to be. It should be the aim of the Otter Leader to have a Den Parent for each Den, as adequate supervision is at all times a necessity.

NOTE: It is essential that a background check be done by ANY parent who volunteers to work with the Raft.

Raft Scouters Names

All registered Otter Raft Sections are required to use the name "AHMEEK" for the Otter Leader. Names for Assistant Leaders and for other instructors (*of any sort*) and Adult helpers will be left to the discretion of the Section concerned.

Names for Assistant Otter Leaders may be taken from:

-  **Atsak:** The Black Bear Nanuk - The Polar Bear

-  **Qimmik:** The Husky Dog Nauyat - The Seagull

-  **Aiviq:** The Walrus Tuktu - Caribou

-  **Amaruq:** The Wolf Ukpiq - The Owl

-  **Iguttag:** The Bumblebee Tiriganiaq - The Artic Fox

-  **Qilalugaq:** The Beluga Whale Oomingmak - The Muskox

Badges of Rank

Otter Leaders and Assistant Leaders wear their association's uniform as provided in the association's PO&R (typically the Rover uniform).

The Raft Leader will wear three half-inch wide white tape rings around the left arm between the shoulder and elbow.

The Den Leader will wear two half-inch wide white tape rings around the left arm between the shoulder and elbow.

The Assistant Den Leader will wear a single half-inch wide white tape ring around the left arm between shoulder and elbow.

Otter Instructors

Otter instructors may be Pathfinders of at least Second Class standard and meet the approval of the Pathfinder Troop Leader; and approval must first be obtained before the appointment is made. A suggested probationary period of 1 month is recommended to allow the instructor to be assessed.

Rover Instructors

A **Rover** wishing to take the Rover Instructor Badge with the Otter Section and with the approval of the Rover Skipper, must hold the Service Training Star and act as an instructor to the satisfaction of the Otter Leader and Group Scouter.

Otter Badges & Award Scheme

This scheme is designed to develop and stimulate the Otter and give a variety and Interest to the Program. It is progressive throughout the period between 5 years and 8 years of age and should be spread over the full three years.

The scheme consists of an Investiture Badge, Four Progress (Paws) Badges, a link to the Timberwolf Pack with the Swimming Otter Badge, Two Camping Badges, a Safety Badge and a Service Badge.

Each Otter Den should wear a 4 cm square felt patch of their Den color at the top of their right arm. Acceptable colors are: Red, Purple, White, Green, Blue, and Orange.

|  Investiture Badge | Signoff |
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| 1. Know a little about Otters. | |
| 2. Know the Otter Motto (Busy and Bright). | |
| 3. Know the Otter Salute and Sign. | |
| 4. Know a little about B-P, the Founder of Scouting. | |
| 5. Take part in an Opening and Closing Ceremony. | |
| 6. Know the Otter Law . | |
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| 7. Know the Otter Promise . | |
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Otter Law

“An Otter is always busy and bright and helps other people by doing a good turn every day.”

Otter Promise

“I promise to do my best, to obey my Leaders and my parents and to be a good Otter.”

Otter Salute & Sign

The Otter salute and sign are similar to those of the Timberwolf section, with the exception that the fingers are held together and not apart. Make the sign by holdin up the 1st (pointer) and 2nd fingers on the “right” hand, elbow to your side and sign pointed upwards.

The salute is the same as the sign, but with the hand brought to the corner of the right eye-brow (or right corner of the hat) in a salute position - elbow straight out.

|  Safety Badge | Signoff |
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| 1. Know your name and address. | |
| 2. Know your phone number. | |
| 3. Be able to print your name. | |
| 4. Know how to cross the road safely. | |
| 5. Know about safety with strangers. | |
| 6. Know the basic rules of health and hygiene. | |
| 7. Know about safety around the home. | |
| 8. Be able to tie your own shoe laces. | |
| 9. Know what 911 is for and how to call it. | |
| 10. Know how to put a Band-Aid on a cut. | |
| 11. Know your Mom and Dad's full names. | |

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| Helping Badge (Red Paw) | Signoff |
| 1. Know about helping others and sharing with others. | |
| 2. Know about cleanliness and caring for your clothes. | |
| 3. Be helpful around the house. | |
| 4. Do a good turn for a relative or a neighbor. | |
| 5. Take part in a Kim's Game . | |
| 6. Take part in the Message Game. | |
| 7. Know how to wash dishes and clean up a table. | |
| 8. Take part in a Raft good turn. | |
| 9. Visit an Old Folk's Home and help serve tea and cookies. | |
| 10. Help set up your meeting hall. | |

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| Activity Badge (Blue Paw) | Signoff |
| 1. Be able to throw and catch a ball. | |
| 2. Take part in a night hike. | |
| 3. Take part in two day hikes. | |
| 4. Be able to sing 3 songs. | |
| 5. Have an awareness of children with disabilities. | |
| 6. Know how to Skip Rope. | |
| 7. Take part in team and solo games or sports. | |
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| 8. Know how to be a good loser and a good winner. | |
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|  | Handicraft Badge (Tan Paw) | Signoff |
| 1. Draw, and color, a scene or event from a story. | | |
| 2. Draw a picture of your house. | | |
| 3. Make a Thank You card. | | |
| 4. Make a model. | | |
| 5. Make a collage. | | |
| 6. Collect 25 stamps (or other similar item) and mount them in a book or display. | | |
| 7. Make two craft items. | | |
| 8. Tie a Square (reef) knot . | | |
| 9. Make a bird feeder from a milk jug. | | |
| 10. Visit a petting zoo. | | |

Square (or "Reef") Knot



Square Knot. Used for joining ropes of equal thickness. It is also the knot used for tying bandages, as it lies flat. This knot is also known as a "Reef Knot". The working end is tied over the standing end, "right over left, left over right."

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Nature Badge (Green Paw)

Signoff

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| 1. Know about caring for the outdoors. | |
| 2. Name 6 animals that are kept as pets. | |
| 3. Make a scrap book about Otters. | |
| 4. Collect 10 flowers and 10 leaves and press them. | |
| 5. Grow a seed in a water soaked paper towel. | |
| 6. Grow a carrot top in water. | |
| 7. Take part in a Raft Nature Walk. | |
| 8. Take part in a trail clean-up. | |
| 9. Plant, and take care of a tree for at least a year | |



Swimming Otter Badge

Signoff

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| This badge is presented to the Otter at his Timber Wolf investiture by his Otter Leader, and may be worn until they have earned their second star. | |
| 1. Know the story of Mowgli. | |
| 2. Know the Timber Wolf Motto. | |
| 3. Know the Timber Wolf Salute. | |
| 4. Know 2 knots - Clove Hitch and Figure 8 Knot. | |
| 5. Have the Safety Badge. | |
| 6. Have earned all 4 Paws. | |
| 7. Visit the Timberwolf Pack 3 times. | |

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|  Camping Badge | Signoff |
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| Awarded to Otters who have spent 5 or more nights camping. | |
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|  The Service Badge | Signoff |
| The Service badge is awarded to an Otter who has completed all of the following Activities, which must be carried out over a period of at least 8 months. | |
| 1. Visit the local Police Station and find out some ways to help prevent crime | |
| 2. Visit the local Fire department and find out the danger of fire and some ways of preventing it | |
| 3. Find out about preventing accidents - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. in the home b. on the road c. in the playground d. in the swimming pool | |
| 4. Find out about recycling of waste, what use can be made of recycled items and take part in a recycling operation. | |
| 5. Find out the effects of vandalism on an area and how the cost of repair effects your family. | |
| 6. Visit the local Ambulance Station and learn about what they do. | |

Uniform

1. Adults wear the uniform as described in your Association PO&R (Policy, Organization and Rules). and do not wear the uniform of the youth members.
2. Youth members wear a long sleeve red t-shirt or sweatshirt and a plain red cap (cap is optional). These items are available in most clothing stores for minimum cost. Badges are sewn directly onto the shirt.

Badges

Badges are worn in the following places on the youth uniform (Adult badge positions are shown in the PO&R).

1. **WFIS Badge:** Worn on the right breast.
2. **Investiture Badge:** Worn on the left breast.
3. **Safety Badge:** Worn on the left sleeve.
4. **Paw Badges:** Worn on the right sleeve.
5. **Service Badge:** Worn at the top of the right sleeve below Group Title Flash.
6. **Group Title Flash:** Worn at the top of the right sleeve along the seam.
7. **Swimming Otter Badge:** Is not worn on the Otter uniform. It is presented at their Timber Wolf Investiture by Ahmeek (The Otter Raft Leader), and is worn only on the Timberwolf uniform.

The Otter Sign

This is carried out with the right hand. The thumb holds down the last two fingers across the palm and the other two fingers are held straight up.

The right hand is then used in the same way as the Military salute, i.e. touching the cap.

The Otter Salute

The fingers are held in the same position as the salute but the hand is held straight up with the elbow touching the side of the body. This position is adopted when making or renewing the Promise.

A Suggested Opening Ceremony

This should be preferably be taken by Ahmeek and should be the first event of any Raft meeting.

The first command by Ahmeek will be the shout "Council Rock". At this command the Otters will form a circle, Otters are facing inward and holding hands.

An Assistant Leader will raise the National Flag and all will salute.

The Pack then sing (to the tune "The Old Grey Mare"):

*Here we sit like Otters on a Cedar log,
Otters on a Cedar log,
Otters on a Cedar log,
Here we sit like Otters on a Cedar log,
Waiting for the fun to start,
Waiting for the fun to start,*

***Waiting for the fun to start,
Here we sit like Otters on a Cedar log waiting for
The fun to start. YEAH!!!!***

The Raft then breaks off to their corners for uniform and paw inspection and the collection of dues.

This is a simple, but effective opening, which will not task the children too much. It is recommended that ALL Otters, invested or not, take part in the opening and closing ceremonies.

The Closing Ceremony

This should be preferably be taken by Ahmeek and should be the last event of any Raft meeting.

The first command by Ahmeek will be the shout "Council Rock". At this command the Otters will form a circle, Otters are facing inward and holding hands.

The Raft sings 'Taps':

Day is done, (stand motionless)
Gone the sun, (point Skyward)
From the lake, (Extend both arms towards floor)
From the hills, (move both arms, parallel to floor)
From the sky, (move both arms towards sky)
All is well, safely rest, (lower arms slowly)
God is near. (bow head)

The Raft then says the Closing Thoughts:

***Thank you, friends, for this day
For my family, and for my play.
Thank you for the good things to eat,
For eyes and ears, and hands and feet.
Thank you friends for all you do
And, I will try to help you, too.***

An Assistant Leader then lowers the National Flag.

Ahmeek will now make any Raft announcements.

The Raft will then sing the Scout Vesper Song (to the tune "Oh Christmas Tree"):

***Softly falls the light of day
As our meeting fades away;***

*Silently each Otter asks
Have I done my daily task?
Have I kept my honor bright?
Can I guiltless rest tonight?
Have I done and have I dared
Everything to 'Be Prepared'.*

The Raft is then dismissed.

The Investiture of an Otter

At the first Raft meeting a new Otter is placed in a Den, preferably with someone who is a friend. The new Otter may wear the Otter uniform with the exception of badges and neckerchief.

In order to be invested an Otter must pass the tests as outlined in the Otter Badges and Award Scheme. Ahmeek will take the investiture and this should be done at the beginning of a Raft meeting. When the Raft is in the 'Council Rock' formation, Ahmeek will ask the Den Leader of the Den concerned to bring forward the new recruit to be invested. The Otter then makes the Otter Sign and repeats the Otter Promise.

First having given the Otter Law. The newly invested Otter is then presented with the Membership Badge and group neckerchief and is welcomed into the Worldwide Brotherhood of Scouting with the Scout Handshake. The new Otter turns and salutes the Pack and all invested Otters return the Salute.

Swimming up to Timberwolves

This is the ultimate ceremony in the Otter Raft for the Otter, as it marks the departure for new pastures in the Timberwolf Pack. This is a joint affair between Ahmeek and Akela who must work together to make it a success.

Before finally moving up to the Timberwolf Pack, the Otter will have visited the Timberwolf Pack on several occasions to meet the Old Wolves and their prospective Sixer.

The Otters are in 'Council Rock' formation and the Timberwolves are in 'Pack Circle' Formation. The open ends of both formations will face each other.

The Otter to 'Swim Up' will face Ahmeek in the centre of the 'V' of the Council Rock formation and the Otters will do their opening ceremony. The Timber Wolves will then do their opening ceremony. The Otter concerned will then go around the Raft and shake hands for the last time as an Otter. Ahmeek will then take the Otter forward to meet Akela. The new Cub will then be formally presented to his new Sixer and the members of his new Six.

The Otters and Timberwolves will then take part in a joint game, and refreshments before the Otters leave for home.

About Otters

The ancestors of otters probably lived on land. Over millions of years, they adapted to life in the water. The two main kinds of otters are river otters and sea otters. They are found on every continent except Australia and Antarctica.

The American river otter is found throughout most of North and South America. Sea Otters live along the Pacific coast of North America, the Aleutian Islands off Alaska, and northeastern Asia. Otters are mammals. They are covered with fur and nurse their young with milk. They Breathe oxygen from the air. Otters are related to Skunks, mink, weasels, martens, and badgers. Otters belong to the weasel family - Mustelidae. The scientific name for the American river otter is *Lutra Canadensis*. The sea otter is *Enhydra Lutris*.

River Otters

River otters live near rivers and lakes. They spend much of their time swimming. Otters feed on fish and small animals such as crayfish. They can crush shells and slice fish with their strong sharp teeth. They also eat snakes, clams, snails, frogs, and even earthworms.

River otters have a small, flattened head, long whiskers, and a thick neck. They have a powerful, tapered tail that makes up one-third of their length.

Adult male river otters weigh 4.5 to 14 Kilograms. They measure up to 1.4 meters long, including the tail. Females are somewhat smaller. Otters can hold their breath and stay under water for up to four minutes.

River otters have good eyesight and a very keen sense of smell. They make many different sounds. They chatter, chuckle, grunt, snort, and growl. They also warn other otters of danger with a shrill whistle.

Legs, Feet, and Ears

Otters have short legs with five toes on each foot. Elastic skin called webbing between the toes helps them swim. Except for pads on their toes and soles, their feet are covered with fur. They use their paws to feel for crayfish under rocks in muddy riverbeds. They hold food in their front paws while they eat it. Special muscles allow otters to close their small ears and nostrils to keep water out.

Otter Fur

The fur on the river otter's sides and back is a rich black-brown color. The fur on the belly is lighter, and the chin and throat are grayish. Coarse guard hairs cover their thick, soft under-fur. River otters take good care of their beautiful fur. They groom their coats every day. They roll on the ground to dry their fur and keep it waterproof. Their fur protects them from the cold.

River Otter Territories

River otters mark their territory by rubbing musk on logs and stones. Musk is a sweet smelling liquid produced by scent glands near the tail. Otters have dens, or homes, on land, in the banks of rivers and ponds. Sometimes they take over an abandoned muskrat or beaver den dug into a riverbank.

Otters are nocturnal animals. They are active at night and usually sleep in the daytime. When they are not hunting for food or grooming their beautiful fur, otters love to run around. They wrestle and chase each other. Otters like to slide down a slippery slope into a pond or stream. Then they race up the slope so that they can slide down again.

River Otter Pups

Otters must be at least two years old to mate. The mating season usually comes at the end of winter. Two months later up to four pups, or cubs, are born. The pups' eyes are closed for five weeks. They have no teeth. They feed on their mothers milk. The mother otter takes care of their pups for almost a year. When she takes out of the den, the father may join his family. The parents teach their pups to swim, dive, catch food, groom their fur, and slide down slopes.

Enemies

For hundreds of years, river otters were killed for their thick, beautiful fur. It was used to make coats, hats, and other articles of clothing. Today many governments have laws against otter hunting. But humans are still one of the worst enemies. Many of these wonderful animals are killed by cars when they cross roads at night.

Otter Raft Leader(s)

The leader in the Raft must at all times try to beyond reproach. The Otters will look up to you to show the way and will mimic what you do.

Simple speech, clearly expressed, should be the order of the day. Listen to the things that children say, not only to you but amongst themselves. Encourage them to discuss things and not just to accept things blindly. We should be prepared to tell them why a certain thing has to be done so that they may more fully understand and learn.

As your mood will be reflected in them, a relaxed, friendly atmosphere with lots of activity for healthy exercise, coupled with love and sympathy and understanding should be aimed for.

Handicraft sessions provide a creative outlet and some Otters will be more at home with some types of handicraft than others. Try to provide the special type for the youngster rather than just provide a general 'all of you will do this tonight' type of session.

Obviously you will have to find out what special handicraft suits the child so the full range will have to be tested first.

Story time is an essential part of the Raft Meetings as it provides an opportunity for relaxation between boisterous periods.

Leader Responsibility

The person chosen to lead an Otter Raft, must of course, be a person of good character, as with all Scouters. As they are in the limelight and open to criticism they should be above reproach and be seen to be living up to the image that Scouting projects world-wide. This also applies to those assisting in the Raft in whatever position.

The Association will be judged by the worst one of us, unfortunately, and we must endeavor at all times to do our best. When in public, always consider that you are being watched, because you are!

A friendly disposition is necessary and this rubs off on the youngsters in the Raft. We must be able to be "one of the gang" and at the same time make the youngsters understand that we, as Scouters, although brothers and sisters in Scouting, are there to know better than they do and therefore to be obeyed.

As relationships build up between Scouters and the Otters it will become apparent that the Otters place a lot of faith in 'Ahmeek' or whoever and this faith should never be shattered. All their problems will end at the Scouters feet and, although to us they will be at times trifling, to the Otters they will be problems of great magnitude. We must ensure that we are absolutely fair in resolving their little problems and youngsters who seem to stand out as 'Loners" should be put at ease and integrated into a 'team', which is what a Den should be.

Scouters will find that, as time goes by, they will gain experience and will be able to use that experience in efficiently administering the Raft. Intimate knowledge of a youngster's home environment, likes and dislikes, physical infirmity and standard of education is necessary, to enable a fuller understanding of that youngsters attitudes and to enable him/her to take a more active part in Raft activities.

A good relationship with the parents is a must as we need the co-operation of the parents and their support in our activities. With the Otter Section a lot more interest is shown by parents and when the youngsters are brought to meetings or activities the parents should be able to see that we care about their children and at this stage contact can be made, sometimes to good advantage, by getting the parents involved.

As time passes we find that more and more children are from broken homes or single parent families. No stigma should be attached to an Otter as he/she is not to blame for what has gone before. All Otters should be treated as to their individual requirements without fear or favor, for once the youngster thinks that someone else is being favored their respect for the Scouter concerned is lost. Contact with your local Pastor or Minister will probably result in information being available to assist in understanding a particular child and can only be an advantage.

Not all parents are interested in the activities of their children and an effort should be made to form a friendly relationship with all parents and to promote an interest in those parents who are not keen.

Ahmeek must make full use of all assistance available to him/her as not to do so will result in the offer of that assistance sometimes being withdrawn. There is nothing worse for a keen person than to be left standing like an ornament during activities. All Otter Section Scouters and instructors are a team and all their various skills should be fully utilized. Use may also be made of Scouters from other Sections of the Group. This not only makes available a fuller range of skills but shows to the Otter that he/she is part of a bigger family than just the Raft. Where Raft Scouters have a problem remember the old adage "A problem shared is a problem halved" and the Group Scouter should be in a position to give good advice. We are not perfect in ourselves but between us we should be in a position to resolve most problems. Remember another old adage that says "Nothing is a problem until you make one!"

Leader Training

As with training for other Sections this consists of a Part One Training Course which will last for one weekend or several evening sessions. At the end of the course a certificate will be issued and a two-strand Turk's Head Woggle will be presented.

Following this 12 months later will be Part Two Training, which will consist of several weekends, normally a month apart, in which the practical skills of Scouting will be presented.

Part Three will consist of a probationary period of 6 months, after which a report will be submitted by the Group Scouter, on the suitability of the candidate in putting into practice what has been learned during the Wood Beads Badge Training.

When a recommendation as to suitability has been received by the trainers, a further certificate will be issued, together with the Wood Beads Badge proper and the Wood Beads Neckerchief.

Whilst the above is not at this time compulsory, it is hoped that all Scouters will want to become as proficient as possible and will take that training. We can all benefit from an exchange of ideas, which is inevitably a product of such training.