



SPIRIT OF THE WATER



RATIONALE FOR ADVENTURE

Water, water everywhere—water to drink, water to cook our food, water to clean our bodies and our teeth, and water to play in! In this adventure, Wolf Scouts will learn how to conserve water and keep it clean in their homes and neighborhoods. Then they'll have a chance to swim together, having fun and practicing aquatics safety.

TAKEAWAYS FOR CUB SCOUTS

- Water conservation
- Aquatics safety
- Skill development
- Physical fitness
- A Scout is loyal, obedient, brave. 

Wolf Handbook, page 294

ADVENTURE REQUIREMENTS

1. Demonstrate how the water in your community can become polluted.
2. Explain one way that you can help conserve water in your home.
3. Explain to your den leader why swimming is good exercise.
4. Explain the safety rules that you need to follow before participating in swimming or boating.
5. Show how to do a reaching rescue.
6. Visit a local pool or public swimming area with your family or Wolf den. With qualified supervision, jump into water that is at least chest-high, and swim 25 feet or more.

NOTES TO DEN LEADER

An overview of BSA swimming and water activities is included in the Appendix. In preparation for any in-water activity, you should complete the BSA online training for Safe Swim Defense. This training outlines how to help lead a safe swimming activity with a Cub Scout pack, Boy Scout troop, or Venturing crew. The training is available at www.myscouting.org.

Meeting 2 will be an outing to a local pool or other swimming area for completion of requirements 3, 4, 5, and 6. Many councils have an aquatics committee able to provide guidance, personnel, pool access, and other resources. Parts of the adventure, including the den outing, may be easier to complete at a Cub Scout day camp or resident camp that offers access to qualified swimming instruction.

Identify the location well in advance of the outing and make arrangements with the staff member in charge. Review in advance the BSA Safe Swim Defense and Safety Afloat procedures. Confirm that all necessary supervision and safety measures will be in place for the outing. Also confirm plans with families, including place, time, and transportation. Secure activity consent forms and submit a tour and activity plan, which the BSA requires for all unit trips that involve swimming. (See the Meeting 2 Plan for more information.)

See the Appendix for optional den meeting activities, including openings, gatherings, and closings.

MEETING 1 PLAN

PREPARATION AND MATERIALS NEEDED

- U.S. and den flags
- Bubble solution and wands for blowing bubbles (Gathering)
- Words for the Water Conservation Song written in large print on a poster board (Opening)
- Materials for the Water Pollution Demonstration (Activity 1): glass baking pan; powdered drink mix; sand; book or small block of wood; spray bottle filled with water
- Materials for the Pollution Obstacle Course (Activity 2): eight plastic cones or buckets; signs; chalk or tape

GATHERING

- Provide bubble solution for Wolf Scouts to blow bubbles while they wait for everyone to arrive.
- If possible, make a variety of wands available so the bubbles will be in different shapes.

OPENING

- Conduct a flag ceremony of your choosing that includes the Pledge of Allegiance and the Scout Law.
- Lead the den in singing the Water Conservation Song (to the tune of “Row, Row, Row Your Boat”):

*Turn, turn, turn off the tap,
Be sure to fix those leaks.
You'll be saving drops of water
Each and every week.
Wash your dishes, cars, and bikes,
But don't let water run.
Saving water is our game
So we can have more fun!*

TALK TIME

- Carry out business items for the den.
- Allow time for sharing among Cub Scouts.

ACTIVITIES

◆ Activity 1: Water Pollution Demonstration (Requirement 1)

- Have the Scouts perform this demonstration, following the directions in the *Wolf Handbook*.
- As a group, reflect on the demonstration and some of the causes of water pollution they might have witnessed. What can they do to help at home and in the community?

◆ Activity 2: Pollution Obstacle Course

- If possible, the den should play this activity outside with these materials: 8 plastic cones or small buckets; signs on sticks; and tape or chalk for marking start and finish lines.
- First, the Scouts use the cones or buckets to set the obstacles over an area of 10 to 15 feet.
- Then they place one sign at each obstacle, each with a label:
 - Candy wrappers
 - Leaves
 - Pet waste
 - Fertilizer
 - Litter
 - Plastic bags
 - Grass clippings
 - Pesticide

- Together, the Scouts pretend to be a stream of water that must remain clean so it can fill a swimming pool or serve as drinking water. They stand single file at the starting line, each boy putting his hands on the shoulders of the boy in front of him. On signal, they move as quickly as possible through the course without anyone letting go or touching any of the obstacles.
- If the den is large, divide the Scouts into two teams. They can take turns running the course while the den chief clocks their time.

◆ **Activity 3: Conservation Quiz (Requirement 2)**

- Quiz the Scouts on how to save water in five different activities listed below. Guide them toward the answers presented here.
 1. **Brushing your teeth:** Turn off the tap while you brush, then turn it back on when you are ready to rinse your mouth. This may save up to eight gallons of water a day in one household—more than 200 gallons a month!
 2. **Bathing:** Take a shower instead of a bath, and limit it to five minutes. A shower with a low-flow head uses less water than filling a bathtub.
 3. **Washing your hands:** Turn the faucet off completely when you are finished, and make sure to fix all faucet leaks. A tiny drip can waste up to 10 gallons a day.
 4. **Watering the lawn:** Do this early in the morning or late in the evening so the water won't evaporate in the heat of the day.
 5. **Washing your bike:** Do this with a bucket that you can refill instead of running a hose the whole time. If you need to wash a car, look for car washes that recycle their water.

CLOSING

- Gather the den together and say: *We have learned a lot about water conservation today. In the next meeting, we will learn about having fun in the water and keeping ourselves and others safe.*
- Recite the Scout Oath.
- Review details for the upcoming outing in Meeting 2. Make sure all Scouts and their families know the plans.

AFTER THE MEETING

- Serve refreshments, if desired.
- Record completion of requirements 1 and 2.
- Work together to clean up the meeting space.
- Prepare thank-you notes for Wolves to sign at the next meeting. The notes should be given to anyone who helps with the outing, including lifeguards at the pool or swimming area.

MEETING 2 PLAN (Den Outing)

PREPARATION AND MATERIALS NEEDED

- Pool noodles or towels to use for the reaching rescue
- One buddy tag for each Scout
- This meeting, a den outing to a local pool or other swimming area, may necessitate more than one visit for all the Scouts to meet requirements 3, 4, 5, and 6. The size of your den may determine how you wish to proceed.
- A Cub Scout day camp or resident camp may be a good site for the outing if qualified swimming instruction and boating resources are available there. Consult with your local council.
- You might also consider local schools, colleges, YMCAs, Boys & Girls Clubs, or the local Red Cross chapter. Your council aquatics committee may be able to help arrange facilities and personnel.
- Swimming activities must be supervised by an adult with current Safe Swim Defense training. All leaders for this adventure should consider taking or renewing such training. You may also want to invite a BSA Lifeguard. ONLY experienced, trained individuals should conduct swimming instruction.
- Confirm that a tour and activity plan has been submitted, if required, and that transportation to and from the event is in place. Secure signed activity consent forms.
- Unit den leader should have in possession (if required by local council practices) the tour and activity plan and a copy of the *Guide to Safe Scouting*.

GATHERING

While waiting for everyone to arrive at the site, remind the boys of appropriate behavior including safety considerations. Point out any rules at the swimming area beyond the basic safety rules of the BSA.

OPENING (REQUIREMENT 4)

- Say the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Ask Scouts to name points of the Scout Law they will demonstrate during the outing (obedient, courteous, etc.).
- Review the buddy system: A buddy is someone to help if you get into trouble, and you can help him if he needs it.
- Have the Scouts repeat the safety rules you reviewed in the Gathering. As a den, recite the SCOUT water safety chant in the *Wolf Handbook*.

TALK TIME (REQUIREMENT 3)

- Carry out business items for the den.
- Have the Scouts tell why swimming is a great exercise. (Exercise strengthens the heart, muscles, and joints. Swimming is one of the best exercises, as it uses most of the body's muscles without putting much stress on the joints.)
- Introduce the response personnel and lifeguards who will assist with the outing. It is their job to oversee the swimming area and respond if someone gets into trouble. Always be very obedient to them; someone's life may depend on it. Make sure the Scouts know where the qualified adult supervisors will be located. Ask Wolves why response personnel and lifeguards are important to everyone there.
- Remind the boys that "A Scout is obedient" in observing safety rules when he is in or near the water. "A Scout is brave" in attempting things that make him uncomfortable. Some people are uncomfortable flying or being up high; others are uncomfortable jumping into water. Everyone is brave when they try to deal with those feelings, whether or not they conquer them.

ACTIVITIES

◆ Activity 1: Reaching Rescue (Requirement 5)

- Do a buddy check before allowing the Scouts to enter the water, and every 10 minutes throughout the session. You may want to assign this task exclusively to one adult.
- Before the boys enter the water, have them do simple warm-up activities, including stretching the torso, arms, and legs. Remind Wolves they must stay in the designated area during the activities—no more than chest-deep.
- Divide Scouts into buddy pairs, and have one pretend to be in trouble in the water while his buddy outside the pool will be the rescuer. First, the boy in the water calls out “Pineapple!” as a “safe word” (he should only call “Help!” in an actual emergency).
- Remind the Scouts that not every person in need will be able to call out for help, even though they are able to briefly struggle at the surface.
- The rescuer then lies down at the side of the pool and extends one arm to his buddy. Next, have the rescuer extend one leg while holding on to the side of the pool. Finally, have him attempt the rescue with a pool noodle or a towel. Then let the buddies switch places and repeat the process.

◆ Activity 2: Jumping In and Swimming (Requirement 6)

Leaders should be cautioned that those without experience in deep water should not jump into it without coaching, practice, and guidance. Scouts who do not have swimming experience should have special attention and guidance from an experienced, trained instructor in order to work on this requirement. Before each Scout enters the water, ask first if he has ever jumped into chest-deep water. It is very important that you understand his comfort level; if he seems nervous, allow him to first slide into the water or step into it using the ladder.

To teach a simple jump entry, the instructor will have the participant stand at the pool or dock edge where the water will be chest-deep but less than chin-deep. (Chest-deep is the limit for nonswimmers.) The Scout should bend slightly at the knees and hop forward as if trying to land with both feet together on the surface of the water. Arms should be extended forward with the body leaning slightly forward from the waist. The participant should jump away from the side, rather than try to land close enough to grab hold.

The Scout’s feet should gently touch the bottom when he jumps in. He should then use the bottom to push off to get started in his attempt to swim 25 feet. Have him lean forward and begin swimming as he comes up. Any surface stroke the Scout is comfortable using is acceptable for fulfilling requirement 6.

Upon completion of the Spirit of the Water adventure, your Wolves will have earned the adventure loop shown here. Make sure they are recognized for their completion by presenting the adventure loops, to be worn on their belts, as soon as possible according to your pack’s tradition.



MEETING 2 RESOURCES

BSA SAFE SWIM DEFENSE

BSA groups shall use Safe Swim Defense for all swimming activities. Go to www.scouting.org/HealthandSafety/GSS/toc.aspx for detailed information about the eight principles.

1. Qualified supervision
2. Personal health review
3. Safe area
4. Response personnel (lifeguards)
5. Lookout
6. Ability groups
7. Buddy system
8. Discipline

Home Swimming Pool Safety for Unit Events

All elements of Safe Swim Defense apply at backyard pools even though they may be small, shallow, and familiar. The biggest danger is probably complacency. Adult supervision must be continuous while the pool is in use. A Cub Scout who can't swim can drown silently within 20 seconds of entering water over his head.

Aquatics Supervision contains safety information specific to both in-ground and above-ground backyard pools. That includes the following:

- Most such pools are too shallow for diving. Diving prohibition should be discussed at a tailgate review for all participants prior to the activity.
- Beginner and swimmer areas may be combined in small, relatively shallow pools.
- Make sure to control access. Many backyard pools are too small to accommodate an entire pack at once. If other activities are also taking place, it may be best to allow only one den into the water at a time rather than allowing Scouts to move at will in and out of the water.
- Many states require pool fencing, which may help with supervision.
- If the uniform depth of an in-ground pool is too deep for short nonswimmers, they may need properly fitted life jackets.
- Rescues, if needed, should be simple. Provide reaching and throwing devices for active victims. A wading assist may be feasible for passive victims.
- For above-ground pools without decks, have a plan to remove large unresponsive adults who suffer a heart attack or other debilitating condition.

Guarded Public Pools With Lifeguards on Duty

Aquatics Supervision also covers swimming at public pools, waterparks, and guarded beaches.

Important items include the following:

- Dens and packs do not need to assign and equip rescue personnel. Professionally trained lifeguards provided by the venue satisfy that need.
- Unit leaders are still responsible for medical screening, ability groups, the buddy system, discipline, and supervision.
- Many public pools will have a safety line at the five-foot mark separating shallow and deep water that can be used to help designate appropriate areas for the different ability groups.
- Otherwise, appoint adult lookouts to make sure nonswimmers and beginners stay in their assigned areas.

Studies show that more than half of victims at public pools are spotted first by others rather than lifeguards. The buddy system is still very important for safety as well as instilling responsibility. It is likely awkward to conduct frequent buddy checks. Therefore, arrange a time for everyone to leave the water and meet at a given location. Then do a head count. Otherwise rely on unit lookouts, buddies, and lifeguards to maintain vigilance. At large waterparks, leaders should accompany dens moving from one feature to another after everyone in the group is accounted for.

SAFETY AFLOAT (Boating Safety)

BSA groups shall use Safety Afloat for all boating activities. Go to www.scouting.org/HealthandSafety/GSS/toc.aspx for more information on the nine principles.

1. Qualified supervision
2. Personal health review
3. Swimming ability
4. Life jackets
5. Buddy system
6. Skill proficiency
7. Planning
8. Equipment
9. Discipline

Water Rescue

Water rescue training for the lay rescuer often uses a reach, throw, row, go mnemonic to establish a safe, effective sequence for responding to water emergencies. That sequence is important to Cub Scout leaders for two distinct reasons. First it establishes the procedure that response personnel under Safe Swim Defense should follow. If professionally trained lifeguards are not available at a swimming location, then the qualified supervisor has to provide personnel and equipment suitable for likely emergencies. Fortunately, that is often not as difficult as it might first appear. For that reason, a review of the reach, throw, row, and go sequence is appropriate. Important detail can be found in *Aquatics Supervision*.

The other reason for reviewing the sequence is for age-appropriate training of youth. Drowning is the second-leading cause of accidental death for those of Cub Scout age. Therefore, there is a chance that Cub Scouts will be faced with seeing someone in trouble. That possibility is further supported by the Scouts in Action reports in *Boys' Life* magazine. Cub Scouts do save people from drowning.

However, there are also double drownings that occur yearly in the United States when well-meaning people of all ages attempt to save drowning victims. Those are often frantic friends and relatives whose swimming skills are no better than those of the person in trouble. Since Cub Scouts often lack swimming skills and the maturity to realize their limitations, it is important to modify the rescue sequence for Cub Scout training to reach, throw, row, and go for help.

Reach: This technique is appropriate to teach Cub Scouts, parents who are nonswimmers, and rescue personnel who are skilled in the water. People who can't swim often begin to struggle immediately after they step into or fall into water over their heads. That is likely to be very close to safety. If so, the rescuer should lie down, reach out, and grab the person. Laying down is necessary since the person in the water will likely stop all effort to remain afloat, and that sudden increase in weight can topple an unprepared rescuer into the water. If the victim is a bit further out, an extension device such as a pole, paddle, or noodle can be used. Those should be swept to the person from the side, not used like a spear. Victims often cannot reach for an extended item, even if it is just a foot away. Rescuers should therefore be told to place the item under the person's arm or within his grasp. Rescuers should also be told to provide loud, clear, simple instructions to the victim, for example "GRAB THIS!"

Throw: The second procedure in the sequence, used when the person is too far out to reach, is to throw the person an aid. A throwing rescue is also appropriate to teach to rescuers of any age and swimming ability. A float with a line attached is best, but any light floating item or a rope by itself may be used. An accurate first toss is required if a line is not attached, but throwing a line takes practice. Ring buoys are often found at hotel and apartment pools and are good devices for Cub Scout practice. Leaders may also fashion throwing devices from light floating line and a plastic jug with just a bit of water in it for weight. A throwing rescue is best suited to poor swimmers in trouble. Drowning nonswimmers will not be able to reach for the object unless it lands within their grasp, nor will passive victims floating face down or on the bottom.

Row: A boat can be used to provide a mobile platform from which to do reaching or throwing assists. Since Cub Scouts often do not have the skills needed for a safe rowing rescue, this procedure is not emphasized for that age group. A boat rescue is also not a common part of an emergency action plan for a unit swim since the swimming area is typically small and within easy reach of shore-based response personnel.

Go: For Cub Scout training, this item should be interpreted as "go for help." That is, they should first shout for help, and if no one responds, seek out a responsible person such as a parent, lifeguard, or park ranger. Poor swimmers should not enter the water to attempt a rescue. On the other hand, a unit swim cannot rely on reaching or throwing rescues for emergency planning. An in-water assist will be needed for a parent suffering cardiac arrest in the water. At guarded swims, GO also means going with equipment since lifeguards or response personnel should never be without appropriate rescue aids.

NOTES