How Beaver Got His Flat Tail-a play:

Complexity: (based on grade level and skill set of actors)

Trees: One dimensional that are held/worn by actors
Two dimensional with added leaves, branches (glue or staple)
Three dimensional trees that are worn as costumes

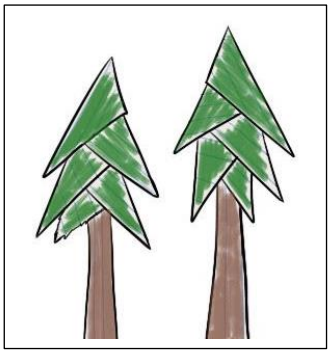
Fire: Simple masks for several students who move together
Larger fire costumes with two sides that are worn

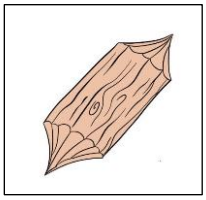
Water: One long, large strip of blue paper
Cut strips of blue paper with small crumpling for texture

Animals: Single sided Masks
Single sided Masks and paper bag costumes
Hat type Masks and more complex costumes
(use of yarn, etc material for texture)

Props: River (This can be long blue paper or painted blue)
Trees (depending on area size) (rolled brown paper trunks with
green leaves [2 dimensional] or painted on large paper [1 dimensional]
You need at least one tree for Beaver to chew on
Few pieces of Beaver wood (rolled brown paper or cardboard tubes
cut and drawn on to represent wood grains)
Beaver Lodge (this is "built" during the play, but could be
pre-made and placed at appropriate time)
Animals (paper sack bodies and masks)
Fire (several students as fire)







Characters: Beaver (can have a colony/family for more actors)
Bear
Deer
Rabbit
Wolf
Fire (several students as fire)
Narrator (can have more than one to tell the story)
Narrator(s) stand off to the side of the area
Tree (that can fall over onto Beaver's tail)
Beaver Lodge
*Could have more than one bear, deer, rabbit, wolf and fire

Acting: Lower Grades can read parts
Memorize and repeat parts at older grades

Scene 1:

Beaver and Bear, Deer, Wolf, Rabbit

Bear, Deer, Wolf and Rabbit come into the scene one at a time

Narrator

Before Humans walked on the Earth, all of the animals could talk to each other and they all got along.

A long time ago, before humans walked on this Earth, Beaver, who is called *tchina* in miluk Coos language, looked very different than he does today. Beaver's tail was huge and fluffy. Beaver would dance around flipping his beautiful tail in the air in front of all his friends.

Beaver arrives on the scene and dances about showing off his tail.

Beaver just loved his tail. He was always dancing and prancing about showing off his tail to everyone.

Bear moves into scene in a way that audience can see his tail

Narrator:

Black bear is called *pelel* in miluk Coos language, has a tail that is small and stubby

Beaver:

Approaching Black Bear and swishing tail

Hey Black Bear, don't you wish you had a tail as big and fluffy as mine?

Bear

I don't need a big, fluffy tail. I am the strongest animal in the forest.

Bear raises both arms to flex muscles

And, I am the decision maker. When there is a problem, all the other animals come to me for help. My tail is just fine for me.

Bear looks at his tail and shows it to the audience.

Beaver:

Hhmph!

Beaver is wiggling his tail and sashays away

Bear:

Beaver, you better be careful bragging about your tail. Something bad might happen.

Bear raises a cautionary pointer finger to Beaver and walks off stage

Deer walks into the scene as Bear walks out

Narrator:

Black Tail Deer, which is called *xwutsxwuu* in miluk Coos language, has a tail that is diamond shaped and not large.

Beaver:

Beaver approaches Black Tail Deer

Beaver wiggles his tail

Hey Deer, don't you just wish you had a tail as big and fluffy and as beautiful as mine

Deer:

Beaver, I don't need a big, fluffy tail. Even though my tail is not big, it is very Important. Whenever danger is about I just flip my tail up in the air and everyone knows to run. I don't have to even say a word to warn others.

Black tail Deer flips his tail up in the air

Beaver:

Hhmph!

wiggling his tail and walking away from Deer

Deer:

Beaver, you better be careful bragging about your tail. Something bad might happen.

Deer walks off stage

Wolf walks into the scene

Narrator:

Next Beaver happened upon Wolf, who is called *dliimek* in miluk Coos Lanaguage.

Beaver:

Hey Wolf, don't you wish you had a tail as big and fluffy as mine?

Beaver swishes tail around in front of Wolf

Wolf:

Wolf acts surprised by what Beaver says

What? I do have a huge and fluffy tail and, unlike your useless tail, Beaver, my tail is very useful. When it is cold out, I can curl up and put my nose into my tail and it keeps me from breathing cold air into my lungs."

Wolf turns around to show Beaver his very beautiful tail and puts his nose in his tail

Beaver:

Hhmph! but you cannot flip your tail up into the air like I can!

Beaver wiggles his tail and flips it up in the air

Wolf:

Beaver, you shouldn't brag about your tail. Something bad might happen.

Wolf walks out of scene

Narrator:

Bunny Rabbit walks into the scene

Beaver next happened upon Bunny Rabbit, which is called *chaχwchaχw* in miluk Coos language

Beaver:

Scampering around, dancing along the path, and flipping his tail up in the air

Hey, Bunny Rabbit, don't you wish you had a tail as big and as fluffy as mine?

Bunny:

Face shows sadness and confusion and looks at his tail

Beaver, my tail is very soft and furry. When you say things like that to me, it hurts my feelings. My soft tail fits me perfectly."

Narrator:

Beaver didn't seem to care that he had hurt Rabbit's feelings.

Beaver:

Shrugging his shoulder, dismissively

Hhmph! But your tail is just soooo small.

Beaver wiggles his tail

Bunny:

Beaver, you better be careful bragging about your tail. Something bad might happen.

Bunny walks out of scene

Scene 2:

Set the scene with a tree that is partially chewed that can be toppled over
Beaver is chewing on a tree by the river with his back to audience.
All other animals approach Beaver.
They can be positioned off to the side so the audience can see the animals and beaver

Narrator:

One day Beaver was chewing down a tree. He was working very hard and concentrating on his task. Suddenly, Beaver feels like someone is watching him.

Beaver glances over his shoulder.

He sees all of his friends watching him. Beaver thinks that all of his friends are watching my tail and admiring it.

Beaver:

Beaver turns around to face the other animals

I know you are all just admiring my tail and wishing you had such a big, fluffy, beautiful tail.

Bear:

No that's not it at all. We saw that you were busy and we wanted to wait until you weren't busy to see if you wanted to play with all of us."

Narrator:

Beaver dances about in front of the tree

As Beaver was dancing about in front of everyone showing off his tail, the wind began to blow.

Narrator makes wind sound and moves arms back and forth together

As the wind blew, it made the trees sway. The tree that Beaver had been chewing on was not very sturdy due to being almost chewed through. As the wind blew, it caused the tree to snap and fall down: Right on Beaver's tail!

Narrator slaps hands together with this sentence

Beaver:

Ow! Ow! OW! Help me; get this tree off my tail.

Everyone runs over and Bear looks down to assess the situation

Bear:

Beaver, I'm afraid we are going to have to cut your tail off.

Bears makes cutting motion with his hands

Beaver:

NO, NO! NO! Think of something else.

Beaver shakes his head from side to side

Narrator:

Bear looks like he is thinking and puts his pointer finger to his temple

Bear thought for a bit and said that he had a plan to help Beaver. Bear told Deer and Wolf to get on one side of the tree and he and Rabbit would be on the other side and they would all work together to lift the tree.

Animals position themselves on the sides of the tree. Deer and Wolf on one side and Bear and Rabbit on the other

Bear:

We will all life the tree a bit and when I say "NOW" you pull your tail out from under that tree.

One, two, three, lift and NOW!

They all lift the tree

Narrator:

But, Beaver's tail was stuck down in the mud and he could not move. The other animals could not hold the tree up any longer and dropped the tree right back down on Beaver's tail.

Beaver:

Ow! Ow! That really hurt.

Beaver is yelling

Bear:

Looks back at Beaver's tail

We are going to have to cut your tail off.

Narrator:

Beaver was so distressed and told the animals that cutting his tail off would not work and to think of something else. All the animals talked about it and came up with another plan.

Bear:

Bunny and Wolf, you get in front of Beaver and Deer and I will lift the tree up just a little bit.

Deer stays on his side of the tree.

Bear stays on his side of the tree.

Wolf and Rabbit position themselves in front of each of Beaver's paws.

Then you, Wolf and Bunny grab Beaver's feet ad pull him out from under the tree. One, two, three, NOW".

Narrator:

Bear and Deer lifted the tree just a slight bit and Rabbit and Wolf grabbed Beaver and pulled him out from under the tree.

Bear and Deer then drop the heavy tree back down on the ground
Beaver puts his hands over his eyes
All the other animals are looking at Beaver's tail

Beaver covered his eyes for a minute and then glanced back at his tail. He was devastated: his tail was no longer big and fluffy and beautiful. His tail was flat and dirty and hairless and had marks from the tree bark imprinted on it. And, it was throbbing.

Beaver could not flip his tail into the air, nor scamper about. So, he had to drag himself about.

Beaver drags his tail behind him to the creek
The other animals follow up him to the water

Beaver decided to head to the creek. He was thinking he could wash the mud off his tail and soothe it in the cold water and it would heal and regrow hair. Plus, the cold water would help his tail stop throbbing.

Beaver swishes his tail in the water and swims around

In the water, Beaver found that his tail was not useless. It was beneficial. It floated and he could use his tail as a rudder and steer himself around. He could also use it as a propeller to make himself go faster. Beaver was enjoying his tail in the water and he swam over to the bank to where all his friends were.

Beaver:

I am now going to live in the water.

Bear:

Wait! You cannot live in the water. You are not a fish and you cannot breathe in the water.

<u>Scene 3</u>

Beaver swims around in the water
He uses the Beaver wood to start building his Lodge.

Narrator:

Beaver explained to the animals that he was going to build a house that was in the water, but not underwater. The house would be dry inside.

The other animals exit the stage

Beaver took to building his beautiful house. His tail was so useful. He could swim around easily and carry mud on his tail to help build his house. He used his tail to flatten the mud inside on the floor of his house.

Beaver:

Swims over to the Bank

Hey, friends, come here and play in my house.

The animals all ran down to the bank

Bear:

Beaver, we cannot go into the water to play in your house because we cannot breathe under the water.

Beaver:

Yes, you can. You only have to plug your nose, swim under the water and come up inside my house. It is dry inside with air to breathe.

Bear, Wolf, Deer, Bunny:

[In unison]. No.

Beaver swims off

The other animals walk off stage

Narrator;

A few days later, Beaver swam back to the bank to see if his friends were ready to come to his new house and play.

Beaver:

Hey friends—come here. Party at my house!

All the animals run to the bank again.

Narrator:

The animals explained to Beaver again that they could not go into the water. Again, Beaver told them to plug their noses and swim underwater and into the house.

Bear:

No. If you want to play with all of us, you are going to need to come up on land.

Beaver:

Acting dejected and sad-pouting face

I can't come up on land because my tail is so heavy I cannot scamper about and play.

Bear:

Reassuring tone

Beaver, it doesn't matter that your tail is flat. Our friendship was not just about your tail being flat or fluffy. We like you for who you are no matter what your tail looks like.

Beaver just swims away.

Other animals walk off stage, huddled together

Narrator:

As the animals all walked away, they talk among themselves and decided that they would not run to the creek bank the next time Beaver called out. They would just let Beaver come up onto the land to play with them.

Another few days later Beaver swam to the shore and hollered for his friends to come and play. No one came. Beaver then thought of another way to get his friends to come.

Beaver:

Come on—it's important! *[shouting]*

Narrator:

No one came to the bank and Beaver makes the decision that he does not need these friends. He will simply swim up the creek to find some new friends. Beaver did not stop to think how his friend might feel about this decision.

Beaver swims along up the creek

Beaver began swimming up the creek for quite a long way looking for other friends. As he is swimming along, Beaver becomes afraid:

Beaver uses his hand to prick up his ears and sniffs the air with his nose.

Beaver hears and smells something very frightening. FIRE: Beaver hears the crackling of a fire and smells the smoke. The word for fire in the miluk Coos language is *hemelt* and it is very scary to all the animals in the forest. Beaver became very worried about his friends. He turns around quickly and swims as fast as he can back down the creek to find his friends. He swims to the bank.

Beaver swims quickly back down the creek and over to the bank

Beaver:

Shouts, excitedly! Hey, Friends, come here.

Narrator:

No one comes. Beaver is very worried.

Beaver:

Shouts again. It's important! Really, really important.

Narrator:

No one comes. Beaver wants his friends to know they should run away to safety.

Beaver:

Shouts again. FIRE, FIRE, FIRE! It's a FIRE!

Narrator:

Still, no one comes. Beaver thinks his friends do not believe him.

Narrator:

Beaver starts swimming in circles

Then makes slapping sounds on the water (can clap hands or have an extra off stage make slapping sounds)

As Beaver is trying to figure out what to do to warn his friends, he starts swimming in circles. He becomes so agitated, he slaps his tail upon the water. None of his friends have ever heard this sound before and they all ran down to the creek to see what was happening.

All the animals run into the stage

There they saw Beaver swimming in circles, slapping his tail on the water. The animals had no idea what was happening and asked Beaver what he was doing.

Beaver stops swimming in circles and faces his animal friends

Beaver was so glad to see his friends. He told them that a fire was coming and that all the animals should come into his house to escape the fire. The animals all thought this was a joke made up by Beaver to trick them into going in the water and his house.

Beaver:

Quick, a fire is coming and you need to dive into the water and come into my house.

Bear:

Wait, your house is made of wood and wood burns. We will not be safe there.

Beaver:

My house is made of a special wood. I have chewed all the bark off of and that is where the oil is that makes wood burn better. Plus, my wood has soaked up water and will not burn.

Narrator:

While all the animals are discussing Beaver's house wood, they stop.

Animals put their hands to their ears to listen and sniff the air

They can now smell and hear the fire. And, they know they cannot outrun the fire.

Beaver:

Quickly, come into my house.

Narrator:

One by one, the animals dive into the water, plugging their noses and swimming into Beaver's house.

Animals hold their hands to their noses and swim to Beaver Lodge.

Just as Beaver swims into his house, the fire swept over the top of Beaver's house. Even though Beaver's house wood was singed by the fire, it did not burn and all the animals were saved.

And, that's how Beaver's flat tail saved everyone.