

Approved 1/12/05

Texas Forest Service Employee Advisory Council
Minutes From
October 13, 2004

Members Attending:

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| Eric Beckers | Sarah Brooks | Sylvia Becerra |
| Debbie Allman | Jarrett Robinson | Paula Cadena |
| Daniel Duncum | Steve Anderson | Richard Dottellis |
| Linda Alford | Bobby Weaver, Jr. | Donna Valentine |
| Ronnie Hamm | | |

Members Absent with Notification:

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| Jill Lipsey | Brad Moore |
| Nick Harrison | |

Members Absent without Notification: None

Ex-Officio Members Present:

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| Tom Owen | Don Cumbie |
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Guests Present:

Bill Rose

Daniel Duncum, EAC Chair, called the EAC meeting to order at 9:00am.

1. **Approval of minutes from July 2004 EAC Meeting:** A motion was made and seconded and the minutes from the July EAC meeting were approved by unanimous vote.
2. **Working Issues from July EAC Meeting:**
 - a. The Council reviewed the following working issues:
 - i. **Involvement of first line supervisors in merit pay process:** Bill Rose discussed this issue in great depth with the Council and understands the issues involved and will communicate with the Chain of Command as appropriate. Of particular note is the necessity to follow-up with the first line supervisor concerning any pay decisions/changes affecting employees in his/her area.

- ii. **Flexible work schedules** : Bill Rose reiterated to the Council that supervisors are encouraged to utilize flexible work schedules when appropriate.
- iii. **Boots added to uniform allowance**: Approved by Director and being implemented.
- iv. **Consistent policies**: Bill Rose reiterated the policies requiring response to pages and use of TFS vehicles. He will continue to communicate as appropriate with the chain of command.
- v. **Use of seasonal employees**: Bill Rose reiterated that seasonal employees will be used only as necessary. Questionable use of seasonals should be reported to the chain of command (including dispatcher and RFC). Reports of improper use of seasonal employees will be investigated and corrected, if appropriate.
- vi. **Casual Friday's**: Tom Owen will draft a procedure covering the Agency's uniform wear. Casual Friday's will be addressed in the policy.
- vii. **Vacation/Comp Time use to cover R&R**: This area is being studied by Mark Stanford, Bill Rose and Paul Hannemann.
- viii. **Employee Suggestion Program**: The Director will be presented with a proposal to create an additional Director's award for employees who significantly improve a process or program.
- ix. **Pay Differential for employees to return to school**: Don Cumbie discussed this issue with the Council. He is drafting a procedure, for the Director's approval, increasing the pay employees can receive after receiving an advanced degree

3. **New Items**:

- a. **Expand uniform allowance to include items already available to USFS**: The EAC unanimously agreed to take no action on this issue. Ronnie Hamm will follow-up with the employee submitting the concern.

- b. **Create a TFS honor guard:** The EAC unanimously agreed to table this issue until the next scheduled EAC meeting.
- c. **Use of seasonal employees for administrative support when full-time employees are sent out of state:** The Council unanimously agreed to take no action on this issue. Richard Dottellis will follow-up with the employee submitting the concern.
- d. **Adopt permanent holiday schedule:** The number of State holidays are determined by the Legislature based on whether the 15 recognized State and National holidays fall during the work week or on the weekend. This year, 12 official holidays fall during the work week; so, all State employees will have 12 paid holidays. Individual agencies and institutions of the State do not have the ability to grant additional holidays. Next year, we will have 13 holidays. The EAC unanimously agreed to take no action on this issue other than sharing this information as appropriate will co-workers.
- e. **Equip dozer transports with air conditioning units:** The Council unanimously agreed to table this issue since the Safety Council is also looking into this item.
- f. **Elections:**
 - i. Positions currently held by Eric Beckers, Sylvia Becerra, Jarrett Robinson, Debbie Allman and Donna Valentine are due for election in November 2004.
 - ii. Tom Owen discussed the election process with the Council.
 - iii. The Chair thanked the representatives cycling off the Council for their service this year and encouraged them to run for re-election if they so desired. (The by-laws allow for Council members to immediately run for re-election if they do not serve a full three year term.)
- g. **EAC Update at Personnel Meeting:** The EAC Chair will be given 5-10 minutes at the Nov 16, 2004 Personnel Meeting to provide an overview to the Agency on EAC activities this year.
- h. **EAC Update in Agency Newsletter:** Tom Owen will draft an EAC update article for the upcoming Agency Newsletter. This article will be shared with all EAC members.

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4. **General Discussion;**

Jarrett Robinson summarized IR efforts to inventory and account for all computers in the Agency. He encouraged the turn-in of old computers.

5. **Next Meeting Date:**

January 12, 2005—Lufkin, Texas: 10am start time

6. The meeting was adjourned at 12:30pm.