

Approved February 8, 2008

Texas Forest Service Employee Advisory Council  
Minutes From  
January 23, 2008  
College Station, Texas  
Website: [TFS Employee Advisory Council](#)

**Members Attending:**

**West Zone:**

Rob Grotty: Urban/Oak Wilt  
Shane Brown: Region Fire  
DeAndra Grizzle: At-Large

**East Zone:**

Russell Lykins: North Region  
Mike Brock: Central Region  
Doris Long: South Region  
Preston Williams: South Region  
Linda Alford: At-Large  
Phil Gates: At-Large

**College Station:**

Lisa Heffer: Finance & Administrative Division/Dir's Office  
James Polasek: Finance & Administrative Division/Dir's Office  
Michelle Gonzales: FRD  
Curt Stripling: FRP

**Members Absent with Notification:**

Eric Copeland: West Zone At-Large  
Susan Cornett: East Zone, North Region  
Bobby Weaver: East Zone, Central Region

**Members Absent without Notification: None**

**Ex-Officio Members Present:** Tom Boggus & Tom Owen

**Guests Present:** None

Phil Gates, EAC Chair, called the EAC meeting to order at 9:00am.

1. **Welcome to newly elected EAC representatives:** Phil Gates welcomed the newly elected EAC representatives Rob Grotty, Lisa Heffer, James Polasek, Curt Stripling, Michelle Gonzales and Preston Williams.

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2. **Approval of minutes from the October 31, 2007 EAC Meeting:**

The minutes from the October 31, 2007 EAC meeting were approved, by unanimous vote.

3. **Updates to Working Issues:**

The Council reviewed the following working issues:

- a. **Uniform Items:** The Council discussed, at length, issues with regard to TFS uniforms. The Council recommended the following actions:
- i. The EAC Chair will ask all employees to document specific uniform issues that occur between January 1 and June 1, 2008.
  - ii. Re-survey agency employees on June 1, 2008 for specific uniform issues that have occurred between January 1 and June 1, 2008.
  - iii. Discuss results of the survey at the July 23, 2008 EAC meeting.
  - iv. James Polasek will research other vendors that "might" be able to support our uniform program with the understanding that changing vendors would be taking a major step.
  - v. Make Lion Apparel aware of our current dissatisfaction and our efforts to research other uniform vendors.
- b. **Smoke-Free Environment:**
- i. The Council recommended the enforcement of the current smoking policy, with special emphasis on the prohibition of smoking in all TFS vehicles. The current policy regarding tobacco use may be found at:  
[http://tfsfinance.tamu.edu/modules/finance/admin/rules/smoke\\_free\\_enviro.htm](http://tfsfinance.tamu.edu/modules/finance/admin/rules/smoke_free_enviro.htm)
  - ii. The Council also recommended the awareness and sensitivity of all employees regarding the use of smokeless tobacco in the workplace. Smokeless tobacco use is not currently prohibited by policy.
  - iii. The Chair will draft a letter to the Executive Team with these recommendations.

4. **New Items:**

- a. **Chair-Elect Election:** James Polasek was elected, by secret ballot vote, as the Chair-Elect.

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- b. **Communication of EAC Activities:** Phil Gates, EAC Chair, suggested the following actions to better communicate the activities of the EAC:
  - i. Approve meeting minutes electronically in order to speed up approval process (“courtesy copy” chain of command during approval process).
  - ii. Publish minutes in an Agency-wide email as well as posting to EAC website.
  - iii. At least quarterly, inform employees of EAC activities using the Arbor Reader and agency-wide emails.
  - iv. Report EAC activities to the Executive Team at least semi-annually.
  
- c. **Need for more mobile communication equipment in the field:** The Council discussed a concern raised regarding the need for more mobile communication equipment. The Council saw funding as a key item with regard to this issue and felt this was best dealt with through the established chain of command. No other action was recommended.

5. **Next Meeting Date: April 23, 2008 (9:00am College Station, Room 318)**

6. **Future Meeting Dates:**  
July 23, 2008—Lufkin  
October 29, 2008—College Station

7. Phil Gates adjourned the Council meeting at approximately 11:45am.