

Texas Forest Service Employee Advisory Council  
Minutes From  
July 14, 2004

**Members Attending:**

Eric Beckers	Nick Harrison	Sarah Brooks
Debbie Allman	Jarrett Robinson	Paula Cadena
Daniel Duncum	Steve Anderson	Richard Dottellis
Linda Alford	Brad Moore	Bobby Weaver, Jr.

**Members Absent with Notification:**

Jill Lipsey	Sylvia Becerra
Ronnie Hamm	Donna Valentine

**Members Absent without Notification: None**

**Ex-Officio Members Present:**

Tom Owen	Don Cumbie
----------	------------

Daniel Duncum, EAC Chair, called the EAC meeting to order at 9:20am.

1. **Approval of minutes from April EAC Meeting:** A motion was made and seconded and the minutes from the April EAC meeting were approved by unanimous vote.
  
2. **Working Issues from April EAC Meeting:**
  - a. The Council reviewed and unanimously approved correspondence to be forwarded as a result of the April EAC meeting.
    - i. Involvement of first line supervisors in merit pay process
    - ii. Flexible Work Schedule
    - iii. Boots Added to Uniform Allowance
    - iv. Consistent Policies: Pagers and Vehicles Use
    - v. Use of Seasonal Employees
  
  - b. The EAC discussed and agreed that future correspondence must be processed in a more timely fashion.

### 3. **Discussion Items:**

- a. **Formal Voting:** The EAC discussed and agreed that all decisions would be put to a vote, per the bylaws.
- b. **Use of vacation or comp time to cover R&R on out of state assignments:**
  - i. Gary LacoX was in attendance and discussed this issue with the EAC. Gary discussed the current federal R&R policy with the Council.
  - ii. The Council unanimously decided to follow-up on this issue with a memorandum to Bill Rose and Paul Hannemann requesting they consider a clarification of our R&R policy. (Duncum will draft memo).
- c. **Pay Differential for Employees to Return to School:**
  - i. Don Cumbie reviewed with the Council the current policy regarding pay increases that are possible should an employee complete a degree program.
  - ii. The Council unanimously decided to draft a memo to Robby DeWitt recommending the Agency consider increasing the pay differential an employee might receive if he/she completes an applicable degree program. (Cadena will draft memo)
- d. **Hazard Pay for TFS Employees Dispatched to Fires**
  - i. The Council was informed, based on information received from Business Affairs, that State law prohibits hazard duty pay to any State employees other than law enforcement and perhaps some correctional officers.
  - ii. The Agency's agreement with USFS states on a federal incident USFS will pay whatever the home organization pays. Thus, no hazard pay when TFS employees are deployed on an out of state fire assignment.
  - iii. The Council unanimously agreed to take no action on this issue other than follow-up with the employee who submitted the issue and share this information as appropriate with others.
- e. **Casual Friday's:**

- i. The Council discussed an issue raised by the Executive Team regarding how the "casual Friday" concept might be applied consistently across the Agency.
- ii. The Council felt the "casual Friday" issue applied to the following locations/groups: College Station, Lufkin, and employees without the full uniform allowance at other locations. The Council felt District office personnel, with full uniform allowances, should be in uniform at all times.
- iii. The Council unanimously decided to send a letter to the Executive Team stating the items in paragraph ii above and recommending the Lufkin and College Station dress codes be combined and incorporated into the Agency uniform policy.  
**(Owen will draft memo)**

f. **Web Page Not Consistent:**

- i. The Council discussed an issue raised concerning the inconsistency in forms on the web site. The problem is threefold—some web pages contain outdated forms, some forms are in MS Word and some are in PDF, and the directory is out of date and not usable.
- ii. After discussion, Debbie Allman and Jarrett Robinson volunteered to take the issue to IR and to the Communications Council for resolution and standardization. The Council also recommended the directory be removed from the web site. The Council unanimously approved this approach.

g. **Change Secretary Job Title:**

- i. The Council discussed an issue raised by employees that the "secretary" job title be changed to one that more accurately reflects the work actually performed.
- ii. The Council unanimously decided to write a letter to Tom Boggus encouraging the need to re-look the Secretary job title as part of the East Texas career ladder project already in progress and recommending a partnership with Human Resources to determine an appropriate new job title.  
**(Allman will draft memo)**

h. **Institute an Employee Suggestion Program:**

- i. The Council discussed a recommendation from an employee that the Agency institute an employee suggestion program with employees sharing a portion of the savings realized.
- ii. The Council unanimously decided, rather than implement a suggestion program, to write a letter to the Director recommending an additional award be added next year to the Director's Awards to specifically recognize a person or persons who made a significant contribution to Agency effectiveness (process improvement, cost savings, etc).

i. **Cost of Living Increases for High Cost Areas**

- i. The Council discussed an issue raised by an employee that employees assigned to specific areas should be considered for a cost of living raise based on the high cost of living in those areas.
- ii. The Council unanimously decided to take no action on this issue other than a follow-up with the employee raising the issue.

j. **Expansion of Uniform Allowance to Include All Items Available to USFS:** The Council unanimously decided to table this issue until the October 2004 meeting.

4. **Next Meeting Date:**

- a. **Oct 13, 2004**—College Station
- b. **January 12, 2005**—location TBD

5. The meeting was adjourned at 4:30pm.