

FRIENDS OF THE LOST PINES STATE PARKS

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

These Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) are established according to Article VII, Section 5, of the By-Laws of the Friends of the Lost Pines State Parks, for the purpose of setting forth the group's organizational and operational procedures.

For this SOP, the following designations apply: Friends of the Lost Pines State Parks (Friends); Bastrop and Buescher State Parks (Parks); By-Laws as established and recorded in Friends' incorporation (By-Laws); qualified members of Friends (Member); Friends members who perform volunteer services to aid the Parks (Volunteers); and, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD).

1. DUTIES OF OFFICERS

1.1 President

- ☺ Conduct the monthly General Meetings and Executive Committee meetings.
- ☺ Administer, at the direction of the Executive Committee, general business and activities.
- ☺ Ensure the effective functioning of committees and keep the Executive Committee apprised of overall committee activities.
- ☺ Serve as liaison, or designate an alternative, between Friends and the Complex Manager of the Parks as well as with the Board of Directors, should one be established.
- ☺ Act as or appoint someone to serve as spokesperson for contact with TPWD, the media, or other organizations.
- ☺ Institute and oversee, or designate an alternative to oversee, special committees.

1.2 Vice_President

- ☺ Assist president in any duties.
- ☺ Assume duties of the president in his/her absence.
- ☺ Coordinate program content and continuing education for monthly General Meeting.
- ☺ Coordinate volunteer continuing education seminars.

1.3 Secretary

- ☺ Take minutes at monthly General Meetings and Executive Committee meetings, and provide meeting summaries to be published in the newsletter.
- ☺ Keep an updated membership list with addresses and phone numbers.
- ☺ Oversee the proper conduct of annual election of officers, including: announcement in the newsletter of upcoming Annual Meeting and election, distribution of absentee ballots, compilation of slate of candidates for office, counting and recording of votes, and announcement of new officers.

- 👉 Ensure accurate and complete maintenance of books and records as specified in Article VII, Sec. 4 of Friends' By-Laws.
- 👉 Maintain volunteer scrapbook.

1.4 Treasurer

- 👉 Ensure proper collection/assessment of dues as required for qualified membership.
- 👉 Oversee, properly record, and report on cash flow and inventory of assets at meetings of the general membership and Executive Committee
- 👉 File appropriate tax forms
- 👉 Oversee proper administration of a Petty Cash fund or other special funds established

2. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

As specified in Article IV, Section 5, an Executive Committee shall consist of the elected officers, the past president, and two at-large members elected by the general membership. Each member of the Executive Committee shall have one vote in meetings of the Committee.

2.1 GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES: Subject to the will of the general membership as stipulated in the By-Laws, the overall role of the Executive Committee is to administer the day-to-day operations and functions of Friends, ensure proper handling of monies received and distributed, and determine the most appropriate policy and procedural approaches to ensure enable the organization to fulfill its primary mission of conservation of the natural resources of the Parks.

2.2 SPECIFIC FUNCTIONS: Functions of the Executive Committee include, but are not limited to the following:

- 👉 Ensure the proper conduct of: elections of officers, amendments or changes to the By-Laws or this SOP; and, other such policy and procedural elements, as specified in the By-Laws.
- 👉 Establish and submit for membership approval dues and/or alternative requirements for qualified membership.
- 👉 Institute policies and procedures to direct the day-to-day operations.
- 👉 Establish and oversee procedures for the handling of finances.
- 👉 Set up, delegate powers to, and oversee a system of operating committees which will enable Friends to most effectively achieve its mission.

3. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

As specified in Article IV, Section 6 of the By-Laws, a Board of Directors (Board) may be established to serve in an advisory and support capacity to Friends. In such case, the Board shall meet at least once yearly, and shall be kept regularly informed of Friends' activities.

3.1 FUNCTIONS: Functions of the Board may include, but not be limited to:

- 👉 Provide advice to the Executive Committee on how Friends can more effectively perform its mission.
- 👉 Serve as special-purpose liaison to other civic organizations and elements of the community.
- 👉 Assist in fund-raising and enlisting community support for the Parks.
- 👉 Make recommendations to the Executive Committee for changes/additions to the membership of the Board.

3.2 STRUCTURE: A Board shall consist of not more than fifteen (15) members. Membership on the Board shall be proposed by the Executive Committee and approved by the general membership, as specified in Article IV, Section 6 of the By-Laws. Each Board member shall have one vote in Board meetings. The Board will elect a chair-person who will plan and conduct its meetings, and serve as a point of contact with Friends' Executive Committee. The term of the chair-person and term of membership on the Board shall be determined by the Board. Two representatives of Friends' Executive Committee or their designees shall attend and represent Friends at Board meetings.

4. STANDING COMMITTEES

Committees established to undertake and oversee the various activities and functions of Friends include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 👉 **Public Relations:** activities may include production of public outreach materials, attracting membership and maintaining membership records, assisting in the distribution of Friends' newsletter, public notification of activities and events, etc.
- 👉 **Finance:** may include planning and conducting fund-raising activities, seeking grant funding, advising the Treasurer and Executive Committee on Friends' finances, etc.
- 👉 **Project Coordination:** may include coordinating volunteer work within the Parks; planning and conducting events or functions within the Parks, or between the Parks and other entities; and, planning and conducting other activities within the Parks.

In the case of the need for coordination of activities or functions between committees, the Executive Committee will designate responsibilities.

5. MEETINGS

- 5.1 GENERAL MEETINGS: Meetings of Friends' membership shall held on the third Thursday of each month, beginning at 7 p.m. The general meetings shall be open to the public as well as qualified members of Friends.
- 5.2 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: The Executive Committee shall meet at least once per month, on a schedule determined by the Committee. Special meetings of the Executive Committee may also be called, as specified in Article V, Section 4 of the By-Laws.

6. QUALIFIED MEMBERSHIP

Payment of annual dues or other considerations approved by the Executive Committee entitles individuals, organizations, corporations or other associations to qualified membership in Friends.

- 6.1 DUES: Annual dues for Friends are established as follows:

Student/senior	\$ 5
Individual	10
Family	20
Organization	30
Special Friend	30 or more
Business: Parks Conservator	50
Parks Protector	150
Parks Steward	300 or more

7. EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS AND REIMBURSEMENTS

- 7.1 GUIDELINES: The following stipulations and guidelines are to direct all expenditures of Friends' funds.

- ☞ Any expenditure must conform to Friends' mission statement as expressed in Article 2 of the By-laws.
- ☞ Any expenditure of funds exceeding \$250.00 must be approved by the Executive Committee, and checks for such amounts must be signed by both the treasurer and president. Only the treasurer's signature is required on checks for expenditures of less than \$250.00.

- 7.2 REIMBURSEMENT: Reimbursement of members' out-of-pocket expenditures for Friends-related purchases are not allowed without prior majority approval of the Executive Committee. Except when a majority of the Executive Committee may

in specific instances elect to set aside these stipulations, in no case shall reimbursement to a Member for out of pocket expenditures exceed \$30.

Volunteer reimbursement will require the following:

- 👉 A receipt identifying the date, location, and amount of the expenditure must be provided to the treasurer in order to receive reimbursement. A notation specifying the items or services purchased must be on or accompany the receipt.
- 👉 All approved out of pocket expenditures must be presented for reimbursement to the treasurer or designee within 30 days from the time of the expenditure, or all monies spent and items purchased will be considered a donation to Friends.

8. NEWSLETTER

Friends shall publish a quarterly newsletter of items of interest to the members, which shall be mailed to the active members.

- 👉 The newsletter editor will be appointed by the president and approved by the Executive Committee, and will have a seat on the Public Relations committee. The editor is to appoint assistants as needed to ensure publication, reproduction, and mailing of the newsletter.
- 👉 Publication in the newsletter shall be considered official notification for all items mentioned in the By-Laws requiring that members be notified. This includes but is not limited to meetings, announcements, activities, elections and amendments.

PETTY CASH DISBURSEMENTS

- 👉 Petty Cash disbursements are generally to be used to reimburse volunteers for small expenses and will currently be limited to the following items:
 - _ interpretative center exhibit displays
 - _ paper towels
 - _ washing utensils
 - _ dish/cleaning materials
- 👉 Only officers of the volunteer organization will be authorized to approve and disburse funds
- 👉 An expense receipt will be required before any funds can be disbursed. Receipts must be attached to the petty cash voucher form
- 👉 All petty cash vouchers must be fully completed as follows:

- _ date
- _ description of expense and who received funds
- _ signature of person receiving funds
- _ signature of person disbursing funds

- 👉 Petty Cash Fund will be \$50.00. Note: at any given time, cash in the box plus vouchers should always total \$50.00.
- 👉 The petty cash fund is not to be used as a change machine.

VOLUNTEER GROUP CAMPSITE

The volunteer campsite is available on a first-come basis and is shared with up to 8 people. Use of the site should be coordinated with a feeling of mutual cooperation and trust. The following guidelines will apply:

- 👉 Volunteers must reserve the site with headquarters.
- 👉 If the campsite has been previously reserved, contact that person to coordinate camping arrangements.
- 👉 The first volunteer to arrive must register at headquarters.
- 👉 If the volunteer site has not been claimed by 8:00 p.m., the park may release the site to the public.
- 👉 Volunteers May use the site once a month maximum, unless no other volunteer claims it.
- 👉 Any abuse of this system will result in the termination of the group site benefit.

Action Committee Grievance Process Flow

For each reported grievance each step of the process flow shall be initialed and dated by the committee member following the process.

1. Grievance occurrence
 - a) A grievance may be reported to any volunteer by a visitor, staff member or another volunteer. Ask the person making the report to put the statement in writing and sign the statement (a grievance submittal form will be available at the Visitors Center).
 - b) Only those reports signed by the originator will be accepted by the committee.

2. Grievance report generated

- a) A grievance submittal form has been established. Any grievance placed in writing and signed by the originator will be accepted by the committee regardless of the form used.
- b) If a grievance is received by mail at the Park it is to be forwarded to the Action Committee Staff representative, who shall notify the committee chair.
- c) If a grievance is received by mail by any volunteer it shall be forwarded to the committee chair.
- d) The committee chair shall issue a unique sequence number to all signed grievances. The unique sequence number will be placed on all original paperwork and all subsequent paperwork involving that grievance report.
- e) The committee chair shall fill out the necessary information on the grievance submittal form and attach all original paperwork if the grievance submittal form was not used by the originator.
- f) The committee chair shall inform the President and the Park Superintendent that a grievance has been received.

3. Notify Park Superintendent if Staff or visitors are involved

- a) The committee chair will notify the Park Superintendent if the report involves a Park Staff member or a visitor.
- b) The Park Superintendent will make the determination if the report will be handled by the Action committee or not.
- c) All original paperwork will be turned over to the Park Superintendent if the grievance is not to be handled by the Action committee.

4. Notify complainant of report receipt

- a) The grievance report originator will be notified of the receipt of the grievance report by the committee chair.
- b) The report of receipt notification shall be in writing and mailed to the originator's reported address. If the originator's address is unknown then verbal notifications can be given to the originator by the committee chair, with written documentation kept in the grievance file.

5. Neutralize report
 - a) The committee chair shall "neutralize" a copy of the reported grievance in such a way as to prevent any preconceived bias on the part of committee members, protect the privacy of the report originator and the privacy of those parties who might be involved. No original document shall be altered in any manner.

6. Committee reviews report / Determine to investigate further
 - a) The committee chair shall call a committee meeting to review the merits of the grievance report.

 - b) Any committee member involved in any way with the grievance shall remove themselves from this grievance process.

 - c) Committee meetings called to review a grievance WILL NOT be open meetings.

 - d) A committee meeting must be a quorum of five (5) or more voting members.

 - e) The determination to further investigate this grievance shall be brought to a vote at the committee meeting. The vote will be based on a simple majority.

 - f) If the committee votes not to handle this grievance, this recommendation will be placed in writing and signed by the committee chair or presiding committee member. The recommendations will be sent to the executive committee. (see step 9)

 - g) The committee members will select a member to be the lead for this grievance investigation.

 - h) The lead will be responsible for overseeing the investigation, including following all process steps, until this grievance comes to closure.

7. Investigate
 - a) The grievance lead shall interview the originator (if possible) and any other involved parties.

 - b) Each investigation shall be handled in an "as necessary" manner.

 - c) Records will be kept of each interview including, but not limited to date, time, place, name(s) of person(s) being interviewed, and name(s) of person(s) doing interview.

- d) Each interview shall be held separately, if practical.
 - e) The lead shall issue a written report of all findings to the committee chair.
8. Committee meets to make recommendation
- a) The committee chair shall call a committee meeting to review the merits of the investigation report.
 - b) Any committee member involved in any way with the grievance shall remove themselves from this grievance process.
 - c) Committee meetings called to review a grievance WILL NOT be open meetings.
 - d) A committee meeting must be a quorum of five (5) or more voting members.
 - e) The recommendation of action to be sent to the executive committee shall be brought to a vote at the committee meeting. The vote will be based on a simple majority.
 - f) The committee chair shall inform the President and the Park Superintendent a recommendation has been reached.
9. Recommendation reported to executive committee
- a) The committee chair shall bring the recommendation and the total history of the grievance to the next executive committee.
 - b) Closure of the grievance shall be reported to the originator.