

**U.S. Department of Agriculture
Council for Native American Farming and Ranching
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Mark Wadsworth: All right. Reconvene here. Got a few minutes before Mr. Ware will show up and explain to us how he's been the chairman of the USDA Advisory Committee for Minority Farmers. And then we can go into discussion council of the topics on the list of the chair. Basically we'll start building more of a better roadmap, getting things accomplished.

I guess, right now, we had a brief discussion with Gilbert Harrison, and Gilbert would like to show you guys a form before Mr. Ware comes here, and we can get this over quite quickly.

Gilbert Harrison: Thank you very much, Mark.

[Indiscernible]. I think -- Thank you, Mark.

I just wanted to take a brief -- a few minutes ago, what I thought or what I had in mind when I was fiddling with this, I felt that each and every comment that's made should get some sort of response, deserves a response, one way or another. There needs to be some formality also of how we get information that we are expected to work on. And right now, we have public comment period, we've got word of mouth, stuff like that, of things that are happening out on Indian Country and I thought that maybe something very simple like this -- I understand there's a bunch of stuff that government has in terms of forms,

but this is very, very simple, and I'm going to go ahead and base it on a project that my community is doing.

There's a sample here. The name here would basically be like my name or my community name. We have an address, we have a phone number, we have an e-mail address. And the problem we have with an NRCS project we have right now is that we have been given a grant of \$300,000 to do a certain amount of work which we're very grateful for a small community, but the prices and the contract was entered into two years ago. It takes that long for other things to get approved, the design approved by NRCS, everything else, and the way the contracts are written and the amount. So, we are vastly underfunded for this project. So, that would be -- my comment will be for additional dollars to fulfill this.

We were told that it can't happen because there's funding issues, which is not a problem, okay? Again, like I said, we had \$300,000 but we're vastly underfunded. The true value of the project to get it done is going to cost us \$400,000. So, now the community has to scramble around, I have to scramble around, try to round up an additional \$100,000 just to get the project done.

Now, if that takes another year, guess what, it's no longer a \$400,000 project, it's probably going to be about \$425,000.

It's a perpetual problem. So, that would go into Item number seven as what are we trying to do.

Eight will be a very brief recommendation by somebody, whoever's filling out this form, and in this case our recommendation will be instead of doing -- the \$400,000 says you have to do this length of pipe work. Instead of holding our feet to that, we should be allowed to reduce that to fit the budget. That would be my recommendation. Or if the NRCS had additional funds, they could supplement it. So, there is one of two ways. That would [indiscernible] in this recommendation.

And number nine would be Navajo reservation signature and date. Now, this should be either for USDA or somebody to review. And I would like to have a copy maybe sent to our committee here, says "one is received." Who received it and what office? Because you have to have shared information, okay? And then the agency, whether it's the NRCS or extension program or something.

And then number three is very important because USDA has been given the first chance to review the problem. And this is where Lisa was saying, maybe it can be done administratively, maybe there is a misinterpretation of the regulation or something. That's the first shot that USDA has a chance. And if it can't be done for whatever reason, then it's for our group to see if we can do some tweaks in the regulations or some

tweaks or whatever to try to resolve this issue. Because where I'm coming from is that our charge is to try to overcome these policies and other things that prevent access, and I think something very similar, simple like this, is a good starting method.

I wanted to share with you some very simple methods -- I use a -- what's that thing they call it? The KISS principle, keep it simple? And people can easily -- but this is a chance to start actually a solution to a problem. And so, I think -- I wanted to share some -- this is just my tweaking, and I'm not the world's greatest expert on forms or how to format stuff, but this is just something that I wanted to put before the council as maybe a means.

The last couple of days, we've had a lot of comments, a lot of information. I think if we had something like this, you could sort of focus in what they were trying to do instead of us second guessing what was wanted. And I think the important thing is way down here, once we get it, everybody that has a concern or something deserves an answer, because maybe we can say, "Yes, we agree with you. We'll try to work on a solution." Or if USDA solves it, then they have little things that we -- the problem has been resolved, we'll do it by policy or something.

But I think somehow I'd like to -- I guess there -- I'd like to see some formality of this, because otherwise we'd end up just talking about issues. And I think here and, of course, USDA, that really comes into where we're talking about an analysis by USDA -- give the departments or whoever a first shot at making an analysis of that problem. Is that a true problem? Is there something we can do something about it? Then it comes before us. So, this gives us some technical background that we can then act on. Anyway, this is just something that I wanted to share and just put it out on the floor. We don't have to act on it. But again, some sort of formality in dealing with issues and resolutions and go from there.

Again, one of my -- I've always said before the council, I'm for the little guy because I have a 10-acre farm, and I don't make \$1 million, and I've got more of this debt situation on that 10 acres than I can afford to shake a stick at. But there are a lot of people in my shoes, a lot of individuals that's trying to do something, and he comes upon this issue or policy or regulation or whatever, and he's saying, "Hey, help. I need help." This is where he starts. We can help him find, the USDA can help him find, but somehow we have to have a formal resolution. That way -- like that little girl said, they come and they never come back. And now we have something that we can respond to that person because we have his name, address.

Somebody can respond and say, "Thank you for this certain information. Here's what we'll do [sounds like]."

Anyway, I just wanted to -- before we get started with this other next speaker, I wanted to share with you some of the thoughts I have in terms of how do we tackle this problem. Thank you very much.

Mark Wadsworth: I guess, Mr. Ware has not showed up yet so --

Angela Sandstol: I have a question.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes. Go right ahead, Angela.

Angela Sandstol: Angela Sandstol with Alaska. I noticed that right along with Gilbert's discussion that there is a summary on written public comments. Is there a -- do we ever see that -- does the summary of the public comments that are spoken, is that -- do we ever see that or they're just spoken?

Joanna Mounce Stancil: Well, we don't have any pre -- in the federal register, it also says that you can submit public comment written. In the first meeting, we had one; this time, we didn't have any. But we have -- this is all being taped, so when I get back, I'll send it for transcription so it'll be available. All the public comment will be available.

Angela Sandstol: Okay. Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, Sarah.

Sarah Vogel: I like the idea of Gilbert's form very much. I think it'd be helpful to us in terms of having some short synopsis of issues as we go around our daily lives and in between meetings and so on, not just at meetings. So, I know there's something called the Paperwork Reduction Act, and I know there are restrictions on creations of new forms, and maybe the council can just have a bunch of these and go home and copy them and -- I don't know. But I think we need a little guidance on creation of forms, but I love the idea.

Janie Hipp: This is Janie. There is the Paperwork Reduction Act. Every form used in an office of the federal government has to be approved by OMB, and there's an elaborate process to get those forms actually approved. We have all sorts of requirements that we have to jump through, which means that even if we were all to love this form, it would probably be three years before OMB would actually rule in it one way or the other. But having said that, based on what you said, Sarah, there is nothing to prevent this body from using this as a way to gather information in your -- in the meetings as they happen and just in your daily lives, because people -- the more the council is out there, the more people are going to come up to you and just kind of keep a flowing record. But if it's used by the federal government and put in our offices, we cannot get

around that at all. We have absolutely no flexibility. We have to go through OMB. Unless I've got that wrong, Chris.

Chris Beyerhelm: No, no. You're absolutely right on that. I was just going to suggest to Gilbert that perhaps there's another alternative. Currently, as part of the 2008 Farm Bill, USDA has implemented what's called a Receipt for Service. And the way that works, if somebody comes in to the county office and is denied something, they can ask for a receipt, which basically would be kind of close to this already. It's going to say who it was, what they asked for, and why they were turned down. And that becomes part of the permanent record.

And then so maybe it should be just an educational piece to telling natives and others that ask for a receipt if you're turned down, and then that'll be their document and then that information, it all gets fed up to Washington and will create exactly what you're, I think, wanting to do, is that there's a listing of why people are turned down. It won't have this about what do you think needs to be done fix it, but there at least will be the reasons people are being turned down.

Janie Hipp: And then, Chris, the bridge over to this council is to figure out how to get that as that information comes up into Washington, how to -- we've got to take the bridge and create it into this council so that you can see it and have

it as a part of your thought process and deliberation ongoing, and I think that's the bridge to create, isn't it?

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, Lisa?

Lisa Pino: Yes. This is Lisa. I was just going to make a suggestion or two that I don't know if it's appropriate because it would be more work for the Office of Tribal Relations. But I worked with a team that was with one of the White House initiatives, Department of Ed, and what we did is whenever we'd go out in the field, we'd have meetings all over the country, we'd invite members of the public, didn't cost a dime to register; we had anywhere from like 100 to 250 people attend.

And one thing that we did is we set up a couple of laptops, sometimes we set up as many as a dozen so that while folks were providing comments, we just gave them a very informal way that they could actually tell their story themselves and enter their -- you know, whatever they were comfortable with, their name, their e-mail, their address, why they were here, what they wanted to share, and then we collected all that info and then we made a big fancy schmancy report. But what we also did on quarterly basis is we just sort of summarized what people were sharing. And ideally, if we were able to provide a quick answer, a quick solution right then and there at the meeting, so we actually had a result that we could share back. And then for

ongoing issues that were more complex, we would just highlight it as a recurring theme.

And then we had a -- accompanying that, we held a -- what was it called, like an open dialogue session, I forgot the -- there was an actual term for the way we did it. So, it was a really nice way to let people know that their stories were being heard. It was an easy way for us to collect the information without having to get an OMB form. And then, it was a really good way of cataloguing what we were hearing all over the country. And so, when you start hearing the same thing on the West Coast as you do in the Deep South, I mean, you know, like there are certain patterns that would emerge. So, I just would offer that to the council as something to think about since we're going to try to meet quarterly, we're going to try to meet regionally, not in D.C., and it might be a way that we can actually begin to chronicle the public comments without making it too formal going down the OMB path.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes.

Gilbert Harrison: Excuse me.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, Gilbert?

Gilbert Harrison: Mark, again I think there are some public comments that are general in nature, you know things like this issue we talked about, a title in the Farm Bill, that's a bigger issue, but there are a lot of small, personal things that

come up, and I say most of it can probably be done through administrative interpretation or something. But anything like this comes up, it deserves some answer. The government is obligated to tell a taxpayer, "This is why we can't do this." Not to say, "Here's a policy, and our policy is not to do this."

And that's the only thing we're saying, is that if I fill this out or somebody fills it up, they know that somebody knows something, that they have their name and they have their address and their telephone, and hopefully, hopefully they'll get some response personally. And I think, to me, that makes a very big impression on whoever it is, John Doe or John Begue [phonetic] or whatever who wants to make this. We've heard enough to say that there's a big picture, and then there're the little guy issues, and that's what I'm trying to say. And how do we get something consistent that we can -- way of addressing these issues. Thank you very much.

Mark Wadsworth: Okay. Moving on with our further agenda, I have worked for the government but it's a tribal government. I'm very familiar on how I have to get things done within the tribal government. I'm the person that goes out there, basically writes up my resolution, and then I go in with all my supporting data and in essence give them the good, the bad, and the ugly, and then they make their decision or tweak whatever I do as my recommendation. I feel, and as I talked a little bit

with Janie, is that -- and you guys were kind of brainstorming, which is, I think, what we need to do know to make this council work a whole lot better -- is how in the future or next meetings we'll have those sorts of council-related actions that we have presented to us, we've got the supporting data, we tweak it and try to make some good recommendations to whatever issue that comes up. And I'll open that sort of discussion up, and if you would want to kind of give us an example of how USDA government does this so that we can accomplish and meld the two that we're all familiar with.

Janie Hipp: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We had a sort of caucus at the break right before lunch, and so we offered to the council, the full council, our thoughts -- "our" meaning Lisa, Mary, myself, and Sarah -- all kind of got our heads together and came up with some ideas about how we could function. So, if you'll bear with me just a minute, I kind of want to walk you through it, and it's not going to be that complicated. But what we've already heard from you all is that quarterly meetings are preferable. Quarterly meetings are going to be dependent on how successful Lisa, Chris, Juan, and I are getting into other people's pockets back at the department because that literally is going to be money driven, okay. We do have money set aside for the two meetings per year, which is in the settlement agreement, but to do quarterly, we're going to have to put some

legs underneath the recommendation that you've already taken action on. And so, that's our job and we will carry that ball, okay?

But regardless of whether we meet quarterly or every six months, our proposal to you all is that before we leave the building today, we identify two issues for next meeting, be that a quarterly meeting or six months from now. Our initial recommendations to you are that we choose these two topics.

One of them should be lending and loans in Indian Country specifically farm loans, because that's what got us here anyway, is farm loan program issues. And so, if we want to expand that to lending in the rural development side of the house, we could do that, but lending, okay?

The other issue that we've heard a lot of throughout this meeting, as well as in public comment last night as well as again this morning, is extension. So, we propose to you that our second topic is extension.

What we then do is we go back and have -- the chairman directs -- well, strongly requests and we're going to have to -- the federal people here are going to have to use our best persuasions -- but we direct the right people within the department to issue an analysis of that issue in Indian Country. And 30 days prior to the next meeting, they deliver a written document to you, which is their analysis. For farm loans,

obviously Chris and his folks would kind of undertake that. If you want to add rural development lending, then we would have it be a two-pronged sort of report. The extension people, I know exactly who to go to at NIFA to ask for that report to be put together. It would have, "here's the history of the program, here's our sort of statistics on this and that and the other," but it'd be a comprehensive report of what's going on in Indian Country around those general topics. You get that 30 days ahead of time, 30 days you have to actually read and digest that report.

And then, when you come into your meeting, then what we have is a lead person on lending and a lead person on extension. They stay with us the whole time we're meeting, and we actually set aside a half day and that's all we deliberate about, is lending. You get to ask questions about the written report you receive, you get to go down every rabbit hole you want go down and get a deeper understanding. And then, before you leave, as a council you can emerge -- and I'd be shocked if you didn't have multiple recommendations to the secretary on that topic -- you emerge from that meeting having had a thorough discussion with the department as well as seen a written report and really -- and you could fashion the public comment around those topics, I don't know. I mean, that's another way to take it another level. But that allows you to be like a laser beam on those

issues for that meeting. You don't try to cover the whole waterfront at every meeting. You really [indiscernible], and then emerge from that meeting with recommendations to the secretary.

That makes your recommendations be fluid and happening every quarter, every six -- however often we meet. That doesn't mean that they remain cemented in. If we hear something a year later that we need to go back and amend that previous recommendation, then so be it. It doesn't matter. And I think that Mark had circulated, I think, this resolution format. That's a great format, but that to me is how you then take that resolution format and drop in what you need to say to the secretary after you've really gone deep into the issues for that particular meeting. So, if I missed anything, ladies, gentlemen, but it seems like that's the way to herd cats and actually be effective.

Mary Thompson: The facilitator.

Janie Hipp: Yes.

Mary Thompson: The meeting will be facilitated by facilitators so that we stay on point and we actually get something accomplished, the bottom line there.

Mark Wadsworth: Angela?

Angela Sandstol: Yes, Angela from Alaska.

Janie Hipp: [Indiscernible] the woman on the council.

Angela Sandstol: Oh, that's okay. I was [indiscernible] here at 12:30 waiting for the starting [indiscernible].

I just have a question, I don't know if I missed it or what. So, where -- will somebody be gathering that analysis for Alaska and bringing it back or is that me?

Janie Hipp: It would just be a part of Alaska. No, no. It would be -- if the extension -- it would not --. You don't have to do the heavy lifting.

Angela Sandstol: Okay. That's what I was just [indiscernible].

Janie Hipp: This is -- the department is going to do the heavy lifting and throw out to you everything we know. And it's not just going to be Indian Country in the lower 48. Obviously we're going to make sure our folks in the department know that whatever they report back to us as the council on extension has got to include Alaska.

Angela Sandstol: Okay. That's just what I was wondering, if I had to come back with anything.

Janie Hipp: No.

Angela Sandstol: Thank you.

Mary Thompson: Those programs or departments would give us the information we need 30 days in advance, give us time to read over it, do our homework, ask our questions, mull it around for a little while, and then whenever we'd go in there and able to

talk to them directly and ask a question to them directly. And I just think it would work great. The quarterly meetings and where we meet, that's something that you all can decide, but I think this is just a good way to get things started.

Janie Hipp: Well, and -- this is Janie again. And as you were saying that, Mary, I was thinking, how do we communicate to tribal leadership. Maybe what we do is the Office of Tribal Relations just does a letter or an e-mail blast to all the tribal headquarters saying, "For the next meeting of the council, we will accept public comments about anything, but we're going to focus very heavily on extension and lending." And so, then you've got teed up the tribal governments and individual Indian people to really get their comments in, be looking for where you're meeting and just be ready. So, just a thought.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, Angela.

Angela Sandstol: I really like -- I know we have to have one meeting in D.C.

Janie Hipp: No [sounds like].

Angela Sandstol: Oh, I thought that was -- or the D.C. area?

Sarah Vogel: No.

Angela Sandstol: No?

Sarah Vogel: We can meet anywhere --

Angela Sandstol: Where did I get the --

Janie Hipp: We won't ever have to darken the door of D.C. again.

Angela Sandstol: Oh. Okay.

Chris Beyerhelm: That's all right for some of you.

Janie Hipp: The reason why the first meeting was in D.C. is because it was the inaugural meeting, it was that.

Angela Sandstol: Yes. I just thought --

Janie Hipp: You never have to be there again.

Angela Sandstol: Okay. But I really like the idea of being at IAC. I think that we have very, very few chances to get as much representation as we did at this meeting. And so, that's just what I wanted to say. Thanks.

Joanna Mounce Stancil: And we've already -- I'm sorry, it's Joanna. We've already been in dialogue with them, and we're welcome to return.

Jerry McPeak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Angela, I was struck yesterday. As you know, our first meeting about no fishing [indiscernible] River, I still can't get past that. But I was also struck yesterday by -- I really can't ---I can't imagine them telling me I can't go fishing in that river.

Anyhow, I was struck yesterday by the subsistence point that several of the Alaska Natives made that that is not included in the census, in the agriculture census. And I know

that those are the two things you want to approach, but to me this doesn't have a whole lot of time for you guys, and to me that sounds extraordinarily important and just one of those things that just has absolutely no common sense to it. As my wife says, we pick blackberries at home because we like to have blackberry pie but not because we have to. But can you guys afford to wait for that not to be in a very important part of something we discuss? Because that ag -- does that ag census -- isn't that right now?

Juan Garcia: It's not out yet. It'll be really soon.

Chris Beyerhelm: Yes. They're going to start collecting the data soon.

Jerry McPeak: So, I don't think you have much time for that. I'm not sure our impact or how we do that, but I'm not sure -- I'm thinking if I were you, I'm thinking I'm carrying that flag pretty high, and I'm on the wagon with you if you get on there, but you're going to have to get on there for it to be a wagon. But I don't think those folks have much time. And 55 or 60 percent of how they live comes from --

Mary Thompson: Subsistence. No. It's more like 80 to 90 percent.

Jerry McPeak: Ecosystem.

Mary Thompson: I mean, I live in the village, I live in -- well, I told you guys this before -- I live a subsistence

lifestyle without electricity, water. That's how my people [indiscernible].

Jerry McPeak: So, my point is, how much time do you have to try to correct that with agricultural?

Joanna Mounce Stancil: Well, this is Joanna. We'll go back and check on that for you. But if it's anything like any other census, they may be too far into the process to make any changes at this point.

Jerry McPeak: Then we'd need to raise all kinds of Billy Hell.

Joanna Mounce Stancil: Yes.

Gilbert Harrison: What I might suggest, I guess -- Janie left the room, but maybe we need to separate the issues that need half the attention and some that don't. Because this one, I talked to the NAS people that were here this week, and it's basically just a policy they have, that you have to generate \$1000 of revenue to be considered a farmer. It has nothing to do whether you're subsistence or not but that's the end result. But if they could just change whatever that threshold is -- and so, I think we could easily, without a lot of research, make a recommendation that they do that.

The other one is in the WHIP program; again, it's just been a policy that they're going to set priorities for funding of those WHIP programs. So, again, an easier recommendation could

be is you provide subsistence some sort of priority on dispersing WHIP proceeds because right now they're competing equally against the frogs and the turtles and everything else. But if we would make a recommendation as a council without a lot of research, I think you could do that and just say, "We think subsistence farming ought to be given a priority if that's what we think when you're designating WHIP funds." So, there might be some low-hanging fruit we can do without a lot of --

Jerry McPeak: And maybe not -- but my point is this, my point is for you Angela and all of us -- because this is -- I was under the impression that this doesn't have a lot of time. Whether it's an act -- I mean, like the rest of you folks like me, I don't give a flip whether my name is on it or not. If you guys can fix it without us doing it, well, fix it for God's sake. We don't need our name on it. Is that a fixable thing with you guys or not?

Mary Thompson: Do you need a formal recommendation from this council?

Chris Beyerhelm: Well, it's -- I think there are different issues here. I don't think the USDA is saying that you're not eligible for the program if you're subsistence. What NAS is saying they're not going to count you as a farmer or a rancher. It's two different things. There's nothing in our loan program that would say we're not going to make a loan to somebody who's

subsistence. Now, we're obviously interested in getting repayment, but if you have some other source of repayment to provide the repayment, we don't really care if you're selling that commodity to make the repayments as long as you've got some source of payment.

Mary Thompson: It's either that or a waiver that subsistence be -- get a waiver and not be competing for those WHIP funds. Either way, it would work, it would fix them there, fix that. And that's something that maybe it would be better if this board came out with a recommendation. And maybe you two should put your heads together and write it out there. Because I was -- and that would be a quick way to get it worked out. But then -- then, I want to go back to this proposal and the meeting that we could, if we're all in agreement, would strike this off the agenda as completed before we get too far off on --

Angela Sandstol: Can I go after?

Mark Wadsworth: Yes. Gilbert.

Gilbert Harrison: Thank you, Mark and members. I like the proposal or the concept that was presented by Janie and some of the ladies here, but concentrating on issues or categories of issues that are being limited to maybe two, and I think that's a great -- to me, that's a great idea and I think it's workable, that we don't just jump around here, here, and here. And I

think -- I support that and I think that's a good idea. Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes. Angela?

Angela Sandstol: I've decided not to wait. I agree that I really like that idea but I think that we need to prioritize somewhat the things that need to happen today and can wait and can wait maybe a little longer. I don't know. Because we just jumped into Alaska, and we all know that that's priority, and if we wait until next year, it's not going to matter. So, that's my two cents. Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, Lisa?

Lisa Pino: Is there a way to do both? I don't know -- do we usually meet a full day or a day and a half or do we have a set amount of time? But I think the intention of the proposal is to allow for enough time -- it's sort of like a crash course in a certain agency area where the programs become a reoccurring theme for the Indian community, and then that gives the council enough time to answer questions -- to get their questions answer, rather, so that you can make specific recommendations. And that the more specific their recommendations can be, then the more that we can get focused with actually instituting change.

So, I don't think we were trying to exclude any other dialogue from happening. I think it was just a way of carving

out some time to get some specific checklist off, so that each quarter we can say, "Look, we're moving on this piece and this piece." And then, whether it's a newsletter, an e-mail blast, whatever, but share it back. So, is there enough time to do both? Is it a day? A day and a half? I don't even know. What do you think, Mr. Chairman?

Mark Wadsworth: I was under the impression she wanted a two-day meeting.

Mary Thompson: Mary Thompson. What we had discussed was like maybe even a two-and-a-half-day meeting, because if you're going to have public comments, you're going to need a little extra time. And so, without trying to put off Alaska or the issue that you have there, because I would make a move that we bring this up at the end of the agenda and have a recommendation to send on over on the Alaska issue, but in the meantime, staying on track with the discussion about appointments of subcommittees in the next meeting. And I like it too and I think we can get more accomplished in that this time other than setting a place for the meeting which can be discussed and different folks, different tribes can host the meeting -- I mean, I'd be willing to say, "Hey, come to Cherokee North Carolina, and we'll treat you good and we'll take care of you." I make a move that we go with this plan in lieu of setting up

subcommittees and appointing chairs and let the whole council get these issues. And I know that we still want to go back --

Jerry McPeak: [Indiscernible] I'm sorry, I missed that set again.

Mary Thompson: I would make a move that we accept the plan discussed in that we would -- the departments would find some money to hold quarterly meetings, that we would set topics, and at this time, the two topics, because of the public comment we got over the last couple of days, that the two topics be lending of farm loans and the second topic would be extension, and both of those programs would get their analysis, their report, their data together from the program.

Jerry McPeak: That could be a different motion. But what was the -- in lieu of, that's the part [indiscernible] one motion. You're going to have four meetings in lieu of?

Mary Thompson: In lieu of the subcommittees.

Jerry McPeak: Okay. That had to be one motion and the other thing has to be another motion.

Male Voice: [Indiscernible] fix that and move to the next problem.

Mary Thompson: Okay. So, in lieu of subcommittees, that we host quarterly meetings with the full council.

Jerry McPeak: That's it.

Angela Sandstol: That's it. Second.

Mark Wadsworth: There's a motion on the floor for in lieu of having the plan, we will negate having subcommittees. Is there any discussion?

Chris Beyerhelm: Request to - Mary's question to amend it a little bit subject to funding availability. Okay.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes?

Angela Sandstol: If funding is available.

Sarah Vogel: Yes. And this might be just a unique circumstance based on the work that the class council did with the FSA and a whole bunch of folks from lending branch, but it wouldn't be a committee per se, but I'd hope to work with Chris on the report back in terms of accomplishments. And that could also include the statistical piece. So, I'm fine with that, but I think anybody on the committee who wants to be of assistance to those folks at USDA who are working on these pieces, like extension or whatever, if you have a particular expertise or interest, we should be letting them know we want to help.

Jerry McPeak: [Indiscernible].

Sarah Vogel: I didn't say we were having committees. I said that doesn't rule us out from volunteering to help on these projects to bring in the material that we want the council to look at. I've already talked with Chris.

Mark Wadsworth: Any further discussion?

Female Voice: Second.

Mark Wadsworth: Okay.

Juan Garcia: Could you repeat the motion again, please?

Mark Wadsworth: You know what, on this, we're going to have these written up by you through the notes that you're taking right now. That'll be transcribed. What I'd like to have happen is that it's e-mailed or faxed, or whatever we need to do within the whole committee so we've got the correct language, as everybody wants, and we can basically go from there. But it's hard for me to repeat everything that you guys want to say to --

Juan Garcia: That's what I -- I asked it for a reason because [sounds like] --

Mary Thompson: I guess, basically it was that in lieu of subcommittees, that we have quarterly meetings with the full council if funding is available, in a nutshell.

Male Voice: And pick two topics, work on those topics in that meeting and move on [indiscernible] next topic.

Jerry McPeak: Let her do that [indiscernible] she said one motion at a time, if I may say so, to rule or whether to do that, [indiscernible]. And if you want to do the next, [indiscernible] motion.

Mark Wadsworth: Mary's motion has been made and seconded. All those in favor?

All: Aye.

Mark Wadsworth: Anybody opposed?

Michael Jandreau: Against. I don't think -- and I'd like to explain my position. I don't think that if we're to fulfill the requirements that our own constituency demands, that it shouldn't be about whether or not funding is available; it should be based on making funding available. And for that reason I agree with the quarterly meetings, I think they're important, and I think they should be done, and I think the funding should be found to do that.

We're not talking about a massive expense. We're talking about insignificant dollars. Even falling off the cliff, we're still talking about insignificant dollars to meet the crucial needs of agriculture in Indian Country. And with that understanding, I accept it and agree that I would come forward and try to obtain the position on this, but it's only if I can truly represent the people I serve. And we're not talking -- we're talking about maybe a total of \$100,000.

As far as that goes, you don't need to reimburse me, I'll come on my own, you don't have to give me anything. Because I believe that agriculture is such a sorely underfunded, underutilized program by the people on the reservation and we have to find a way to escalate their opportunities to access something that every other American has the opportunity to participate in. That's the end of my statement.

Mark Wadsworth: Juan, did you want to -- [indiscernible]?

Juan Garcia: And Michael, I totally understand your position, funding should be made available. And this is why I mentioned earlier that funding should be made available from all USDA agencies involved. I cannot commit, I'm just telling you all straight out. I cannot commit --

Michael Jandreau: I realize that.

Juan Garcia: And I understand. I cannot commit from FSA that we can fund four meetings a year. I'm just -- and I know it's \$100,000, and it may seem like insignificant funding but right now, with the budget situation, \$100,000 is a lot for one agency. And I'll do whatever I can to propose or to try to sell to the other agency heads within USDA, and there's a lot of them, that this is an important project here, an important goal that we have as a council. If we can talk to extension, to NIFA, and we can talk to rural development -- rural development is in a tough situation right now, also just like all the other agencies are. But I totally agree that we should meet more than twice a year, because otherwise, we won't get anything done. So, you have my commitment to do whatever I can. I hope that the Office of Tribal Relations over there needs some help, Dr. Leonard's help, to try to obtain funding for this.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, ma'am?

Mary Thompson: Thank you. Mary Thompson. But with the next meeting in three or four months -- or three months, would be in the next fiscal year, so that we may be able to get that one done which will give more time for maybe some of the programs to find a funding. So, this next one, it might work out okay. If we need to hold the meeting an extra day or so to get the public comment, to get all the -- get the best bang for the buck, I guess, we could do that. And the time or the place, we can agree on. We've got a little time to work that out. So, I don't think that this move is unrealistic simply because we're at the end of this fiscal year, and so the fund set aside out of this settlement will take care of the next meeting.

Juan Garcia: Well, and if I can -- excuse me. If I can clarify, we're already in fiscal year 2013, beginning October 1st, so this funding came from this fiscal year's allocation.

Mary Thompson: We have [indiscernible] some savings from last year to put back over.

Juan Garcia: Yes. And, well, the situation that all the agencies are under right now -- and I know you all understand this, I don't have to repeat this, but we're under the fiscal cliff cloud, see what happens, we're under a continuing resolution right now until March 27. All indications are from Congress that will continue on a continued resolution for the full budget year. So, it all depends what happens for the

second continuing resolution. We could get the same funding we did in FY '12, we could get less funding. We're also under the cloud of the fiscal cliff, that we don't know what's going to happen here, what Congress is going to do. So, it's just a tough situation.

Janie Hipp: And we don't have a Farm Bill.

Juan Garcia: And we don't have a Farm Bill. They are working on the Farm Bill. There're a lot of negotiations right now [indiscernible].

Jerry McPeak: [Cross-talking] if you want some of it.

Juan Garcia: We'll do whatever we can to obtain the funding. And as I mentioned earlier -- and it's good, because we need some results. And going down to a couple of main issues, I think it's a step in the right direction here for us.

Mark Wadsworth: Now, did we need to finish this with a second?

Mary Thompson: Do we need to actually put it in a motion as to how we're going to conduct the next meeting? We discussed it. We'll just leave it at that? The meeting's set and you know it. And the place and the time will be figured out later? Good deal. We can strike something off the agenda there. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen.

Mark Wadsworth: We have Zach Ducheneaux from IAC, wanting to give us kind of an update on the network system, I believe.

Jerry McPeak: Who is this?

Mark Wadsworth: Zach Ducheneaux.

Zach Ducheneaux: Good afternoon, everybody.

Female Voice: Good afternoon.

Zach Ducheneaux: I'm fighting the bug so forgive me if I cough or sniffle around while I'm up here. Thank you very much for the opportunity to address the Council for Native American Farming and Ranching. It's an honor to be here amongst the folks who have the task in their hands of making recommendations to make this world better for our Indian producers so that we don't have to be here in 20 more years fighting the same battles. We've always said at the IAC that one of the things that was most important about our settlement as Indian people was we got programmatic relief. We got the opportunity to have this meeting and make those recommended changes.

I've been able to slip in and out of the meeting a few times this afternoon and a little bit yesterday, and there's a lot of -- the discussion is pretty scattered, which is what you're going to get whenever you bring people from all across the country anyway, but I just want to kind of try to bring up a finer point to it.

There are some things that this committee could recommend tomorrow that would improve Indian Country agriculture access to USDA programs the next day. One of those would be to change the

way we do an operating loan. If anybody in here has ever operated a cattle herd, you know they make you a loan to buy cows and then they send you out the door to go find an annual operating loan. So, the first thing you do when you sell your calves is you pay back that entire operating loan, and if there's anything left, you serve as a term debt [sounds like].

If we would term the first year as operating, treat this as supervised credit which is what it's supposed to be. Help that producer get better at planning with the working capital reserve. We're going to have people that are ready to graduate, not people that we're trying to force out the door to graduate. That's one thing that could help in FSA -- and I need to visit with my friend, Chris, over there about that because I've got a couple of different scenarios laid out, and it makes a lot of sense.

The next thing, there is a sector of people in Indian Country that are going unserved by the FSA, and it's because of the credit history requirements that are in the regulations and in the manuals. I think those restrictions need to be loosened a little to take into account all of the circumstances that Indian Country encounters that isn't the same just to cross that imaginary line where the reservation boundary ends.

For example, we had a gentleman work with us at the network trying to refinance a pickup loan and an operating loan through

an FSA loan. He had bad credit, but he would've saved enough in interest had he got the FSA loan to make a plan to take care of all of that. We could help prop that guy up. We were the last place he had to come to, and we sent him a letter that says, "No, you don't have the credit worthiness to play in this game."

That's something that we could do. Because those people need service, and they're not getting served. So, we need to try to meet those producers partway. We can't just say, "This is the program we're going to operate. This is how it's been forever. You guys fit this mold." We've got to reach out to them, they'll reach to us and we'll find somewhere in the middle.

Another concrete impact we could have in Indian Country is with the conservation programs. The state of South Dakota does a great job in Indian Country in conservation programs but there are still problems that occur. When the funding is divvied up into the pools, if you're an Indian producer, they throw you over into the Indian pool whether you could compete in that general pool or not. And what I think should happen is that there should be a screening process, and if it looks like this Indian producer could compete with a non-Indian counterpart, put him in the general pool, let him get at some of that money. Don't just put him over here because he's an Indian producer. This is supposed to be set aside for those that can't get into

that pool. So, if you do that, then you've got Indians who wouldn't have never had a chance over here competing for set-aside dollars, which I think is what the intent was. That's a concrete change that could be made and would really make impact just next year.

And last but not least, the FRTEP agents provide a vital service that has been missing in Indian Country since time immemorial. The other counties have all had it. We've scratched and clawed to maintain some level of FRTEP funding, but it's dwindling. And I saw my good friend, Verna Billedeaux, up here visiting with you folks about it. And short of cloning her and putting her on every Indian reservation, we need to get someone like her around there. And one of the recommendations that the council could make is that find a way to fund FRTEP agents and don't open the door for the tribal colleges to get in there and raid that pot of money because that's going to kill our FRTEP program. Yes. It doesn't make sense, does it, Jerry?

Jerry McPeak: That's not what we heard yesterday [indiscernible].

Zach Ducheneaux: Just to give you a little update on what the network has been up to lately, we visited 300 tribes in the last two years, physically put our feet on the ground on 300 reservations. That's not quite as many as Mr. Davis [phonetic] did on his rap tour -- he took 20 years -- but in that time we

have sat at producer's tables, heard their woes, heard their dreams, helped try to bring some of those dreams to reality with the assistance of the USDA programs that are available.

We have helped intertribal organizations to coalesce around a cause in the Northwest and the Rocky Mountain region. Our little network of technical assistance specialists is directly responsible for about \$6.5 million worth of FSA direct loans to Indian producers that would not have been there had we not been out there helping them. We're responsible for about \$3 million in conservation contracts in Indian country that would not have been there had we not been out there to help them. And we all love what we do. One of the things that you can't build in someone is passion, and our folks are all passionate about it.

But I just wanted to try to bring a point across that there are some things that could be done pretty short order, some recommendations that could come -- I understand it's a lengthy process, and I hope this council exists for about 10 years and then is not needed anymore because we fixed everything. But there are some things that could be done in the short term that could impact next year.

Mark Wadsworth: Would you like to take questions?

Zach Ducheneaux: Yes, I would love to take questions if this guy will let me.

Juan Garcia: Yes. This is Juan Garcia.

Mark Wadsworth: You need to go?

Zach Ducheneaux: No, I'm fine.

Juan Garcia: You mentioned about the conservation, the different conservation pools.

Zach Ducheneaux: Yes.

Juan Garcia: Are these pools that the state technical committee sets, like for example, EQIP is a different pool -- I'm unfamiliar how the way that works but --

Zach Ducheneaux: Yes.

Juan Garcia: So, if you're in Indian Country, you're automatically under that one pool and you can't compete with the other pool?

Zach Ducheneaux: Yes, in South Dakota.

Juan Garcia: How about other states like North Dakota?

Zach Ducheneaux: There are other states that I have heard do it different but I've never been physically there to see it happen so I couldn't say with any degree of expertise.

Juan Garcia: So, is this something that can be worked out through the state technical committee? Because they do have membership of all different organizations in that state technical committee, they should.

Zach Ducheneaux: Yes.

Juan Garcia: So, I think -- because the state technical committee is the entity that recommends to the state

conservationists how those EQIP funds should be allocated out for the particular practices and so forth. And so, I was just wondering if it's an issue in South Dakota with the state technical committee, it needs to be brought up.

Mark Wadsworth: We'll have Gilbert and then Mary and then Mike.

Gerald Lunak: Can I respond real quick? It's Gerald Lunak. I think the head of state technical committee is the one that needs to facilitate that discussion, and it varies state to state. I know in South Dakota, they've done that where Indians fight for their own money and everybody else gets -- In Montana, I believe we fought to do what Zach said is, we want to compete with everybody else, and then the people that need the tribal money can go after that, after those people are qualified. So, I think state conservation is probably in Indian Country need to step up and say what are they doing in their state, and that would be a good starting point to create this discussion.

Juan Garcia: Yes.

Mark Wadsworth: Gilbert.

Gilbert Harrison: Thank you. This is Gilbert Harrison. You know, you made some recommendations on some of the issues and recommendations. Do you have it in a format where you could submit it as a written recommendation to the council?

Zach Ducheneaux: I absolutely will.

Gilbert Harrison: I think that would be a good starting place, because we're just saying that's something that we really need, something concrete that we can focus on. So, if you have those and your board has that, that would be a very good first stepping point.

Zach Ducheneaux: Absolutely.

Mark Wadsworth: Mary Thompson.

Mary Thompson: Thank you. Excuse me. I thought I was ready to talk.

Sometimes I think that there's a lack of communication between -- well, if I start at the bottom, the state cons coming up to the regional area folks. Because whenever the funding comes down and gets dispersed out to the state -- I'm thinking this is how it works -- and then the state allocates that fund over to the state conservationist which then divvies up the pool of money, and yes, there's a little set aside for Indians, but I think that just making sure that from national to area or regional, or whatever, down to the state cons, that they're all getting that same bit of information and communicated to them and designate and delegate to them their responsibility to work with these tribes.

And you know, with the funds being divvied up -- I mean, the general pool of funds, there's usually a lot more money in there, you could do a lot more projects. Yes, you've got a lot

more people competing for it, but in comparison to the set-aside funds for Indian tribes, like everything else, it's too low. So, I agree with Zach there, that if those projects or programs can compete with non-Indian conservation projects, then they should be allowed to compete. Is there a policy that prohibits Indian, Indian project from accessing the general pool of funds?

Zach Ducheneaux: Mr. Chairman, if I may? I don't think that there is enough leniency given that that doesn't have to happen in every state. And what we're suggesting with those recommendations is that we take away a little of that leniency and say, "If you've got a percentage of Indian Country in your state, you're going to do it like this." They apply for the general pool first; if those Indian producers that don't make the general pool then compete against each other for the Indian pool of money. That's --

Mary Thompson: Well, you see what I'm thinking is -- and on the other side of the country and in a different state, that's how it works.

Juan Garcia: It's targeted money, apparently.

Mary Thompson: I guess what I'm saying is that each state operates it a little bit different and nobody's playing under the same set of rules. Thank you.

Gerald Lunak: Just a comment. I think what's happened in my experience in the West is that the state technical committee

takes the acres of Indian land within that state and tries to match it up with the number of dollars. Because they feel like if -- for the full amount of acreage within that state, they would allocate X number of dollars to the tribes and non-members, depending on the number of acres within that state. So, that's been the justification.

Early on, when there wasn't any Indian allocation of EQIP, that was our argument for that. We said, "Look, we've got X millions of acres in the state and our EQIP dollars are miniscule. So, here are our acres that was our bargaining chip at the early state technical committee meetings to justify those dollars. And many states like Zach's, we've outgrown that type of policy. We're saying, "No, we're good enough now and big enough and aggressive enough that we should be able to compete for the other dollars. It's at the discretion of that state technical committee and that chairman to basically make that discussion.

Juan Garcia: They were trying to do a good thing. We target funding. It's what they were trying to do.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes. And if I may, Michael Jandreau?

Michael Jandreau: I agree with what Zach is saying. I mean, a typical example is being a rancher myself, you watched in all of the projects, even on the reservation, went on to deeded land that was owned by non-Indians in that community or

in that vicinity, and the dollars that are being made available utilizing the formula that you're talking about are totally -- there's not a real measure of need that those general dollars being utilized not by Indian but another area are in excess of what bringing the reservation lands up to standard would be. The standard of development has suffered so long that it needs to be brought up to a level where they can compete. And if you utilize only those set-aside dollars, we're never going to reach that, because as Zach has pointed out, there are some in the industry that are capable of meeting and in some cases exceeding the capacity, but they are still pushed back into those tribal dollars that are set aside. The other part of it is if they happen to work in the NRCS office, they always get the first shot, which has happened.

Mark Wadsworth: Sarah Vogel, please.

Sarah Vogel: This is -- my comment has to do with an analogy that occurred for quite some time in the lending field, where there was a set-aside for socially disadvantaged farmers, which was a good idea, but misconstrued, it served to exile Native Americans and other minorities from roughly 95 percent of the money and limit them to five percent of the money. And when it went to farm loans or something -- like in North Dakota, there was enough money for one farm loan per annum for a minority. So, I think that's one of the problems in the vast

evidentiary, blah, blah, blah, blah, that -- and I think instead of it being a floor, it became a ceiling. And you certainly don't want this conservation money, the set-aside to be a ceiling. You want it to be at least this much, and then move on from there. So, I think your point is very well taken and it should not ever be construed to be a ceiling, and access to the entire pie for Native Americans and other minorities is essential.

Mark Wadsworth: Janie Hipp.

Janie Hipp: This is Janie. I don't -- there are a couple of things going on in NRCS that I think we should be mindful of, and it's happened in a couple of places and it really speaks right to the heart of the technical standards utilized by the technical committees.

In Wisconsin, all the tribes got together with the state conservationist in Wisconsin and came up with their own traditional ecological knowledge-based technical standards that allow the tribes in that state to basically use that -- not Western science-based technical scientific standards, but traditional ecological based standards to actually deploy NRCS programming. That then got adopted in Alaska. So, I think it's a very -- and I know it's being worked on in Washington State and it's also being worked on in Arizona in terms of just getting with tribes across that entire area and seeing how the

traditional knowledge can be incorporated into how programs are deployed on the land. And I totally get what the conversation is here.

I think threading the needle is really important because if you then say, competing in the big pool, then you're going to be competing in the Western science-based technical standard pool. Do you see what I'm saying? And I don't know how to get where you're going, but preserve the ability for tribes to incorporate their own traditional knowledge within the deployment of practices on the land. And I think if we try to -- I don't want to -- I want to preserve that because I think it's really important and it's shown to be very effective. And so, how do we -- and I don't think it can be answered right now. I'd just kind of throw it out on the table as an issue that it would be really great if trying to figure out some recommendations around NRCS programs so we can figure out how you do both. How do you have equity in the pools or access -- whatever, however you want to term that, what you brought up, Zach, but then also preserve the ability to utilize on trust lands those traditional knowledge-based deployment. And I don't want to lose that.

So, I don't know how the answer is but I think what it does call for, Mr. Chairman, is that after we deal with loans and extension at the next meeting, I think the next meeting should be about conservation programs quite frankly, and maybe the

whole meeting be about that, because by then we probably will have a new Farm Bill, there's talk about fundamentally kind of renaming -- there's this -- conservation programs are critical in any country, period. I don't care where you are. And I think it really kind of warrants its own conversation. I don't think we need to have a motion or anything. I'm just kind of throwing all that out.

Zach Ducheneaux: Mr. Chairman, if I may. I will submit some maps to the council for the record that illustrate what Chairman Jandreau is getting at, how Indian Country is behind so they should have a double shot at that. You know, you can fly over my reservation and you can about draw the fee and trust boundaries by the watershed development, because on the fee land, there's a stock pond here and there's one at that corner, there's one over there all the way up that watershed, and on the tribal land or trust land, you've got a big washed out gully running right down to the river. So, we've got to do some catching up before we're on that same plain.

Mark Wadsworth: Thanks, Zach. But I just have one question and concern here too because I had not heard this before, that there is a confusion in my mind, have they this year folded or going to fold WHIP in to EQIP? Have you heard anything in that?

Zach Ducheneaux: That's what we are hearing, that they're going to all be put into the two conservation programs.

Mark Wadsworth: Which is?

Zach Ducheneaux: WHIP will be rolled in with EQIP.

Mark Wadsworth: Okay. So, they'll be one --

Zach Ducheneaux: They'll just become practices on that docket.

Mark Wadsworth: Okay. When we did that, did we allow for the ability for wildlife or concerns, did it merit going to the EQIP? Because what I'm getting at here is we have a speaker lady that was talking about their moose population, and their only avenue was to go through WHIP for their funding. Now, if there's the same criteria within WHIP into now EQIP -- it sounds like I'm rhyming here -- I think, in a way it'll be a better thing because there's more money. WHIP was not funded as much as EQIP is. But if we could get into our notes, Joanna, in that lady, you know -- and I know you have outreach workers throughout the United States and in Alaska, and if we could get one of your people to explain that WHIP-EQIP possibilities for them, I think we'd do a service. And she's right back here.

Zach Ducheneaux: Okay. Very good.

Joanna Mounce Stancil: The half a moose?

Janie Hipp: And one follow-up comment. This issue got pushed up, I think at the last AFN meeting, and the head of NCAI

is meeting with the head of NRCS next week about this issue. So, it is at the highest level of -- I think, I think -- I don't know, I think you may be right that there's a bigger pot so it may end up being okay. But at the end of the day, this is probably going to just be the beginning of what we might end up wanting out of the Farm Bill.

And so, if everybody's talking about collapsing down to four -- I mean, that's what was on the Hill, is collapsing down to like four conservation programs or something like that, then what it warrants us doing is keeping a very laser eye focus on impact in Indian Country, and how we're going to deal with that in the short, mid, and long term.

Mark Wadsworth: Any more questions? Thank you, Zach.

Zach Ducheneaux: Again, I want to thank you all. You all got my card. We've got people out there, if you need eyes and ears on the ground that can help you identify these barriers. Please don't hesitate to call us.

Sarah Vogel: We're going to do that.

Janie Hipp: And Zach, one more other thing I wanted to let the whole council know, Zach and I had been working to pull up all of the networks' quarterly reports to the Office of Tribal Relations. We've got those. They haven't been redacted for taking out personal people's names which we have to do, but we will get those out to you all ASAP once we kind of darken out

individual people's names. But there're a lot of files. I mean, you've got the first taste of that last time we met, but what we're going to send to you between now and the next meeting is the entirety of all of their quarterly reports for the whole couple of years that they've been going out there. So, thank you, Zach, for everything you all are doing.

Zach Ducheneaux: Thank you, folks.

Mark Wadsworth: Go ahead, Gilbert.

Gilbert Harrison: Mark and members and Zach, you know, I really appreciate Joan and Zach, you guys working together to have this joint conference. I think it's really, really informative. And the council here has been talking about maybe having a quarterly meeting to address some of these issues. And on behalf of the council, maybe your office could join us to participate, not as a council member, but at the meetings to be a resource to us. Thank you.

Zach Ducheneaux: Absolutely. We would absolutely love to do that. Thank you very much for your time.

Mark Wadsworth: All right. Do we really need a resolution that we're going to address lending and the FRTEP for next meeting? Do we want a formal resolution on that?

Angela Sandstol: A motion will do, so it's on the record.

Mark Wadsworth: Okay.

Angela Sandstol: I'll move.

Mary Thompson: What is it?

Angela Sandstol: Lending and extension. I'll make a motion that lending and extension be two of the main topics of our next meeting.

Gerald Lunak: Seconded.

Mark Wadsworth: And moved and seconded. Any discussion?

Chris Beyerhelm: Mr. Chairman, if I could again, with Angela's permission -- I don't know exactly what Janie was thinking or the group was thinking about lending, I have no objection to it, but I think we should extend it to commercial lenders also. It's not just FSA lending that when we talk about credit -- because what we've been talking about is having a credit summit, a farm credit, AVA and Indian bankers [sounds like], and everybody at the table. So, I just want to make sure that the record reflects that if we're going to have this conservation, it's about the full measure of lending in Indian countries.

Angela Sandstol: So, amend to include financial --

Sarah Vogel: I don't think it [cross-talking].

Mark Wadsworth: It's just credit [cross-talking].

Chris Beyerhelm: As long as we agree that it's not just going to be FSA, I think that's fine. I think the motion's fine. I just wanted to make sure the council [cross-talking].

Mark Wadsworth: Rural development to [indiscernible] lending.

Janie Hipp: [Indiscernible].

Mark Wadsworth: All right.

Mary Thompson: Chairman, I guess the only discussion is, for the record, that those programs have the analysis, the reports, the data, the information that we need to do a little homework on, 30 days prior to the meeting once it's been set.

Mark Wadsworth: Okay.

Michael Jandreau: I just have one issue, I guess, I want to throw out. Zach kind of reminded and I guess just for discussion, is there going to be a need in our future or would it be to our best interest to form any kind of official relationship with IAC, NCAI? Should we be doing MOUs between our two groups? Something along that line.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes. We have a motion on the floor right now, and then we can address that one after we clear that.

Michael Jandreau: Okay. Sure.

Mark Wadsworth: It's been moved and seconded. All those in favor?

All: Aye.

Mark Wadsworth: Anybody opposed? Motion passed. Now, the MOU [cross talking].

Gerald Lunak: Now, the reason I say that is because I don't think we need to duplicate. We've got Zach's people out there working. I know NCI has got their natural resource committee. We've got all these -- there's an army of Indian organizations that are trying and a lot of our concerns and issues mirror theirs, and I think we need to make sure we don't spend undue time rehashing stuff that those folks are working on or vice versa. If we're working on something that's kind of out of their wheelhouse, and we can share that information. We need to have that interaction, and I don't know if that's to be official or if we just kind of recognize it and move forward with it.

Mark Wadsworth: As the --

Mary Thompson: Was that -- are you talking about like with the extension?

Gerald Lunak: I'm talking about NCIA and then Intertribal Agricultural Council.

Mary Thompson: Oh, so we're not talking about --

Gerald Lunak: Or you know, it could be any Indian -- natural resources for other organizations. What's our relationship with these groups can be and how will it be -- or do we just invite these guys in when we think we need them?

Janie Hipp: Can I speak to part of that?

Gerald Lunak: Sure.

Janie Hipp: First of all, Intertribal Ag Council for the technical assistance network has a cooperative partnership agreement with the USDA to just deliver that. So, I think that whoever made the comment about embodying them to be with us all the time, that makes a whole lot of sense because we're already in agreement with them to deliver the technical assistance piece anyway, and my personal opinion has always been that this council needs to hear from them every time we meet about what they're hearing on the ground because they can be some eyes and ears that we are going to get hard pressed to do personally. So, that's one thing. So, we kind of already have an agreement. Who knows whether -- I'm not sure we need to replicate that.

I think if we just invite IAC to every meeting to have a report from the network, then that kind of does that. I don't know where we go with agreements with other organizations. I don't know one between USDA and NCAI. But I can tell you, I talk to them every single day, multiple times, so, I don't know how we do that. INCA has other agreements. Office of Tribal Relations is at agreements with INCA. So, those kinds of relationships are kind of already embedded in various places around USDA. And I'm not sure --

Gerald Lunak: I guess the only thing I'm looking at is when you have the meeting -- it's similar with what Zach did here. When you have NCAI -- NCAI is one of our -- our folks can

be sitting at their natural resource committee meetings, or we don't know there's a million other opportunities for us to plug into other people's reality so that we're not sitting here hashing over stuff and they're 600 miles away, we're talking about the same thing, and it's a bit of a -- So, I think we need to have visibility and interaction, just like we're seeing right here. I mean, really, his list included our list. So, that's kind of what struck me about that.

Mark Wadsworth: What we'd like to do is -- can we take a 15-minute break here? And then we'll -- I think we don't have to worry about the committee portion of the agenda, and I guess we just kind of have to come together and decide where we want the next meeting at.

Angela Sandstol: And the last issue.

[End of file: 1003]

[End of transcript]