

**U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Council for Native American Farming and Ranching  
December 13,2012**

[Start of file 0:00:52: 1004]

Mary Thompson: So, the speaker's not going to be here, huh?

Mark Wadsworth: Yes. It looks like the speaker didn't make it so we'll just --

Mary Thompson: All right. We'll just take another one off.

Mark Wadsworth: Now, let's kind of bring back the discussion and let's just discuss it, on Alaska and the Native Agricultural Statistics. And I believe that the situation was that we're not able to count our subsistence Alaska Natives under the ag census because they do not derive \$1000 in income to be classified. Is that correct, Chris?

Chris Beyerhelm: I'm not the expert. That's my understanding when I talked with the NAS folks, that their standard is \$1000 of revenue. So, if you're under that, you're not counted. They're not specifically counting out subsistence farmers but it's just because they probably don't generate any revenue, that's what happens.

Mark Wadsworth: Okay. My comment is kind of this, is that there are red deer herders, there're Alaskan reindeer herders, it probably would be pretty easy to prove that they're getting

over \$1000 of meat from these animals which wouldn't -- you know, maybe we could change that to include -- I'm just throwing it out. Go ahead, Jerry.

Jerry McPeak: Thank you. This is McPeak. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In a -- what would you call it -- a sidebar meeting just now, we kind of -- Chris and Angela kind of came to a conclusion about -- and I've agreed that we're going to make a motion later on that we have that that be something that he'd present to the secretary when he writes it up, and at the end of the deal, that's going to be included in that, and I think Chris understands, Angela understands just how they want to do that, I think to get done. So, I think they've gotten there.

Mark Wadsworth: Okay.

Mary Thompson: And also, that the WHIP program in Alaska have a native preference.

Chris Beyerhelm: Well, Mr. Chairman, is it okay we just talk about it now or are you on another agenda?

Mark Wadsworth: Are we finished with the NAS subject? Just as we were talking to Mr. Ducheneaux, they are going to meld WHIP under EQIP now, I guess under the new Farm Bill, and I think that we're past possibly the NRCS-EQIP deadline for this year in Alaska -- I wouldn't know that but I know they have deadlines too that they have through EQIP. But for this year, I think WHIP is still in existence.

Juan Garcia: It's still in existence. It's just funded, you know, [indiscernible] funded.

Mary Thompson: So, excuse me -- so, WHIP is in existence this year in Alaska?

Juan Garcia: Yes, the WHIP program is still there. The reason that the information that my state person sent me [indiscernible] talked to NRCS was that last year, they targeted funding to another wildlife initiative. I mean, there are WHIP contracts there for the moose and the deer. And the way that it was explained to me was that by the time they were able to get funding for that moose habitat was really late, close to the end of the fiscal year in September and they weren't able to -- I'm sorry.

The NRCS received the funding really late in the fiscal year for these WHIP contracts, W-H-I-P, and they weren't able to get the sign ups going and get the contracts approved by the end of the fiscal year.

Mary Thompson: Can I ask who that is? Who said that?

Juan Garcia: The state director for FSA talked to the NRCS state conservationist in Alaska.

Chris Beyerhelm: And, Juan, if I could just --

Juan Garcia: Yes. He probably mentioned something --

Chris Beyerhelm: Yes. The acting chief for NRCS spoke when I went over and spoke about the Farm Bill, said there was

\$3 million allocated to Alaska, and I don't know what particular project, but he did say the \$3 million of the WHIP funds were allocated to Alaska.

Juan Garcia: Yes. Bob Jones is the NRCS state conservationist there. And I sent this information to Jason Weller, who is the acting NRCS Chief right now -- Dave White retired, and Jason Weller -- and he was here this morning speaking at the panel. But I sent him this information and he was aware of it. So, they're aware of it, and as far as what they're telling me, the program is still there. It was just funding came late in the fiscal year last year. So, the program is alive and well in Alaska. Okay? I just wanted to clarify that, Mr. Chairman.

Mark Wadsworth: There is another subject matter brought to my attention, and I hope I say this the most appropriate way we can, is that we really have really appreciated your help, Janie, and --

Janie Hipp: It's that time. It's that time.

Mark Wadsworth: It is that time. But what our thought is this is -- and maybe we need to talk to the DFO or whoever is in charge -- but Janie, you're a travel member, aren't you? And we just want you to be able to still be included in this council in some way, and I guess if we would be able to support some effort in that and start that thought process, that's kind of -- I'll

just open it up for discussion and what everybody else's opinion on that. Yes, Angela?

Angela Sandstol: This is Angela. How many of these conversations were going on? Because we had the same conversation about Janie, and she was the only one that wasn't in one, I guess. But we thought about maybe in an advisory kind of position but I don't really know at this point.

Janie Hipp: Well, you all are going to make me cry, aren't you? I will do whatever I can to assist this council in whatever capacity we can figure out as legal and ethically allowable because this is so important. This council is so important. And I would consider my life to be a failure if this council is a failure. That's how much I think that this council is desperately needed. There's got to be some central focal point that these kinds of issues funnel into that has the ear of whoever is secretary. So, it's really important. I'll do whatever I can. I'll show up whenever you need me to. And even if we figure out that we can't do it, I'm still going to be in the audience, and I'll just stand up and mouth myself off. But it won't be seen as lobbying.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, Gilbert?

Gilbert Harrison: Mark, I know there's probably been several conversations more than that maybe, but on behalf of Navajo and myself, I really want to express my appreciation, not

only your participation on the council but at the USDA Office of Tribal Relations. I imagine you've got more insight than all of us put together on issues that affect Native American lives.

In a lot of cases, we are still in a third world country. In fact, I just got my passport so I could come to Vegas. But really, so I think you have very -- you have a lot to offer in terms of expertise, experience, and knowledge that we could use in whatever capacity. And I know that, again, like myself and on behalf of the Navajo Nation, not only thank you but we'd like to see you again, maybe quarterly meetings, whatever. But again, in Navajo they say, [in Navajo], that means this one word [indiscernible], that means "thank you very much."

Mark Wadsworth: All right. I guess -- Did you want to make a motion?

Sarah Vogel: [Indiscernible] a resolution for the secretary to figure out how to keep Janie on this council? I'll make that motion.

Michael Jandreau: I'll second it.

Mark Wadsworth: Motion has been put on the floor to solicit the secretary of ag to see if is there any possibility of having Janie still remain an active participant within the Council for Native American Farming and Ranching.

Michael Jandreau: That sounds pretty good.

Mark Wadsworth: Any further discussion?

Michael Jandreau: Question.

Mark Wadsworth: Okay. Motion has been brought to question. All those in favor?

All: Aye.

Mark Wadsworth: Anybody opposed? Motion passes.

Janie Hipp: I abstain.

Mark Wadsworth: But anyway, I guess our next quarterly meeting, discuss a place. One of my thoughts -- and I'll just throw it out there -- there's a Society of Range Managers meeting that is nationally put on by the SRM national organization that tribes across the United States are starting to become involved with, and a lot of the producers within Indian Country are starting to come on board to it. Her name is Diana Doan-Crider, and Janie knows who exactly who I'm talking about, another very committed woman towards helping Native American get involved. They're going to be having a meeting in Oklahoma. So, then when I said Oklahoma, Janie -- Janie, I'm going to put you on the spot now -- you were mentioning there might be a possibility of being at your reservation?

Janie Hipp: I'll contact the governor [indiscernible] and see if we can be hosting [indiscernible]. [Indiscernible] probably Norman or [indiscernible]. We have an office in Oklahoma City too.

Mary Thompson: When is this?

Mark Wadsworth: I don't have the exact date of the SRM meeting but I will --

Mary Thompson: Probably next month [sounds like].

Mark Wadsworth: I believe it's in the end of February.  
Yes, Mary?

Mary Thompson: Chairman, thank you. Mary Thompson.

I like having the meetings in conjunction with other meetings, but for the purpose of and as we discussed having the next meeting to focus in on and hone in on the couple of different topics, I think that our meeting should be held maybe the day before or the day after, the couple of days before or after, so that we can really sit down and specifically get into this or our subject matter there. My only suggestion, a couple of days after or a couple of days before.

Chris Beyerhelm: Mr. Chairman?

Mark Wadsworth: Yes?

Chris Beyerhelm: I'm not opposed to what she suggested. I'm just a little concerned about the timing, that on these two issues we want to talk about, if the paper needs to go out 30 days before the meeting, that's all they're going to give, with the holidays, it's going to give at most 20 working days to do the paper. I would just be a little concerned about that.

Juan Garcia: If I can say, Mr. Chairman, the meeting is February 2nd through the 8th.

Mary Thompson: Wow. That's close.

Female Voice: Good thought, [indiscernible].

Mark Wadsworth: But we could still have it around your area, right?

Janie Hipp: Push it further into the spring.

Mark Wadsworth: Any suggested dates?

Sarah Vogel: March sounds better than February. April.

Mark Wadsworth: April? Late March? We start turning out cattle in my area about April 20th, so we get kind of real busy about that time.

Lisa Pino: This is Lisa. The last two weeks of March, how does that work?

Gilbert Harrison: These are [indiscernible].

Lisa Pino: Yes.

Sarah Vogel: Did you say that does not work?

Lisa Pino: No. Does that work, the last couple of weeks of March?

Sarah Vogel: Yes.

Lisa Pino: Yes.

Mark Wadsworth: As possible meeting days?

Sarah Vogel: Yes.

Mark Wadsworth: We're going to look at the room availability and stuff within having a meeting on the last two

weeks of March, in one of those weeks, if everybody -- Can we do this motion?

Janie Hipp: Yes. So, Mr. Chairman, I move that we have the next council meeting somewhere in the window of the last couple of weeks of March, depending on other events happening and room availability, that we have it alongside the Chickasaw Nation, if at all possible.

Gerald Lunak: Second.

Mark Wadsworth: It's been moved and seconded.

Mary Thompson: Question.

Mark Wadsworth: Question brought up. All those in favor?

All: Aye.

Mark Wadsworth: Anybody opposed? Motion passes. Now, who wants to make the last motion, or the other concern [indiscernible].

Gilbert Harrison: Mark, we're going to be talking about -- This is Gilbert. At our next meeting, we're going to be concentrating or focusing on a couple of items or areas. Who is going to take the responsibility to make sure that the appropriate people are invited and that the information that we're requesting from them is going to be put together so that they know what we're looking at. And I think we need to know who will be -- is that Chris or is that -- Okay, fine. Thank you very much. That's it.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, Chris?

Chris Beyerhelm: Mr. Chairman, I'd just like to bring up, it's my understanding that at the next meeting we're going to be talking about those two issues that we agreed to. And out of this meeting, we've agreed to make a recommendation to the secretary about Janie's continuation on the council. I would like to -- I think there're three other low-hanging fruit that I would like to recommend that we come out of this meeting with a recommendation to the secretary, and one is that I think we should make a recommendation that the secretary should direct all of USDA to help fund this committee. That'll help Janie and Juan in their efforts to get that funding. Because they can ask for it all day long, but if the secretary tells them to do it, that's fine.

The second I'd like to consider --

Michael Jandreau: [Cross-talking]. I'll make a motion.

Mark Wadsworth: Let's just do that.

Male Voice: I'll second.

Chris Beyerhelm: Okay.

Jerry McPeak: We're going to get there and there are going to be three things in that when he gets through.

Janie Hipp: [Indiscernible] motion.

Mark Wadsworth: Any further discussion?

Mary Thompson: Question.

Mark Wadsworth: All those in favor?

All: Aye.

Mark Wadsworth: Anybody opposed?

Chris Beyerhelm: And these next, I don't really know our motions because they're not ready -- well, I'll let the committee decide. On the issue, the WHIP issue and the NAS issue, what I would like to volunteer to do is to work with NAS and work with NRCS to write up a recommendation -- I don't know the language -- to help me write up a recommendation that we would then circulate back to the committee to then send to the secretary as a recommendation. So, maybe we have to wait until it's actually written up before we would vote on it. So, if you could just agree that I would take the action item for those two things [cross-talking].

Jerry McPeak: I'd like to make a motion to allow Chris to proceed with getting a language necessary to make -- what do you call it [indiscernible]?

Sarah Vogel: Subsistence.

Jerry McPeak: Subsistence farming for the agriculture census [indiscernible]. I make that motion.

Male Voice: Second.

Mark Wadsworth: Any further discussion? All those in favor?

All: Aye.

Mark Wadsworth: Anybody opposed? Motion passes.

Chris Beyerhelm: The last one would be the same thing on the WHIP issue.

Mark Wadsworth: We just lumped them together, [cross-talking].

Chris Beyerhelm: Oh, okay. I'm done then.

Mark Wadsworth: Zach has basically been asked [sounds like].

Chris Beyerhelm: I'm done. Thank you.

Mary Thompson: Did you have a timeframe on that, Chris? Tomorrow, yesterday, next week?

Chris Beyerhelm: Given the facts that holidays are on us, first week of January, is that --

Mary Thompson: Okay. That's timeframe.

Chris Beyerhelm: Is that okay?

Mark Wadsworth: We could possibly even have a conference call after we receive it and see if we can pass it over the phone.

Chris Beyerhelm: And if I can do it sooner, I'll do it sooner.

Mark Wadsworth: We'll see how that works.

Gerald Lunak: I'll make a motion we adjourn this meeting.

Jerry McPeak: Are you serious? [Cross-talking]

Mark Wadsworth: Well, there's a motion on the floor. All those in favor?

All: Aye.

Mark Wadsworth: Anybody opposed?

Mary Thompson: Gilbert didn't have anything? Oh, Mr. Chairman, I was trying to think of some other low-hanging fruit and something else we needed to get done before we get out of here, because it seemed like this worked out pretty good this time. [cross-talking].

Lisa Pino: One more, one more. And I think I'd like to do like what Chris did as something to think about that we can draft and then vote later, but -- and this is Lisa -- but one critical issue from Civil Rights is that we don't have racial ethnic data for a lot of the programs, a lot of the USDA programs, and it's difficult to assess how effective the programs are in terms of serving different communities of that data. So, I'm not sure what it would look like yet written up, but I'd like to propose to the council to think about recommending to the secretary some form -- I'm not sure what it would be yet -- but some form of policy guidance requesting all 17 agencies on our programs to make the effort to begin the process of collecting that data. It's so critical for us to be able to determine whether or not community's being served. So, I just wanted to throw that out there before March.

Mark Wadsworth: And Juan, you had some things also?

Juan Garcia: Yes. And I totally agree with Lisa. This is Juan Garcia. I just had another recommendation for the group. You know, we've been discussing about these quarterly meetings and we're going to do our best to obtain the funding for it.

The other option that is available -- and we have the technology, USDA has the technology at the present time -- is the use of what we call a video teleconferencing. VTC, for short. Just as a background, I have 51 state directors, and we do a call every week with 51 state directors through this system. And it's just a video. I mean, you can see each other and it's just like looking at each other. I know it's not a person deal. But if it comes down to it, travel could be made by the council members to the either NRCS or FSA state office, and we could link everyone through a video conferencing if we need to have a two-hour call or something like that.

It works very well. You just have to get used to it a little bit, but once you get used to it, it works. So, that's another option, Mr. Chairman that we could utilize. We could compensate, reimburse for the travel, go into that state office of each of the members here and we have the equipment to do it. So, it works well. It's just an option that I wanted to throw out.

Mark Wadsworth: Go ahead.

Janie Hipp: Okay. So, seeing how as you all don't want to get rid of me, I just want to tell you just in case we can't work that out that I really appreciate every single one of you and your willingness to serve on this council, and I've already said how important I think your work is and how important you are, and we heard how important this council is to Indian Country just by being at this meeting and having several hours of public comment. It's just really -- this is a unique council. It's terribly important to really kind of crack through these lingering issues that we have.

And sometimes it's not anything USDA is doing per se; it's the way our laws are written and get delivered to our doorstep. But at the end of the day, I always believe that if we can put our heads together, roll up our sleeves, link arms, and keep walking ahead, then we can figure this out. And it's not going to happen overnight, but it's just so, so important that we do this work, and it's so important that we do this work not only for Indian producers that are out there right now but for our kids. And I'll never stop doing this work, ever. And I just really look forward to seeing you all at the next meeting in whatever capacity I'm in, and it's been an honor of my life to help be around when you were created, and I just -- you're never going to get rid of me. Thanks.

[End of file: 1004] [End of transcript]