



Council for Native American Farming and Ranching  
Minutes

July 20, 2017

University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, AR

**1. Call to Order and Roll Call/Introduction: Mark Wadsworth**

**Start: 9:30 a.m.** Call to order by Chairman Mark Wadsworth.

**Members present:** Mark Wadsworth; Angela Peter; Erin Parker; Jerry McPeak; Shannon McDaniel; Roselyn Yazzie; Gilbert Louis III; Sarah Vogel; Margaret Goode; Sherry Crutcher; Jim Radintz, on behalf of Chris Beyerhelm (Farm Service Agency or FSA); Carl-Martin Ruiz, on behalf of Winona Lake Scott (Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights or OASCR), Linda Cronin (Office of Tribal Relations or OTR); Jimmy Bramblett, on behalf of Leonard Jordan (Natural Resources Conservation Service or NRCS). Tawney Brunch is the only member not present (pre-arranged).

We do have a quorum.

**2. Blessing: Gilbert Louis III**

Introductions by each Council member.

**Jerry McPeak:** BIA officials are not here. They are not being represented here, and that is indicative of the attitude we deal with.

**Mark Wadsworth:** In Section 12(C) of the Bylaws: BIA has permanent invitation.

**Abby Cruz:** As Designated Federal Officer (DFO), I'm aware and will continue to do my best to get a BIA representative here. I had confirmed their attendance, but received an e-mail yesterday stating that they would not be here.

**Mark Wadsworth:** Do you need a letter?

**Angela Peter:** Hard time with continuity. If we don't know each other and can't do things in a timely manner. As a Council, we're not allowed to have alternates. Are the agencies allowed to delegate their representation?

**Josiah Griffin:** Yes.

**Angela Peter:** Regional conferences in Alaska: BIA have not attended either of the first two. We need the partners at the table.

**Jerry McPeak:** Counterpoint: Jim and Carl-Martin are effective and consistent members; they have consistently helped us understand and feel better about where they come from.

**Mark Wadsworth:** Linda, what is your position, what's next for the Office Tribal Relations?

**Linda Cronin:** Not sure of the timeline, but I will be there through Sept 30. Then, we'll know more.

**Sarah Vogel:** Responding to the absence of the BIA (again). Page 69 of the updated "Your Guide to FSA Farm Loans" guide book references the BIA and their phone number. Jim (Radintz) - make sure they answer their phone/email. My experience: they (BIA) are not responsive. If BIA is not adequately addressing concerns, all future additions to this new book should say "Send them to IAC" who can direct people to the right spot.

**Jim Radintz:** Regional offices are more responsive, but there are still issues/challenges.

**Sarah Vogel:** This is a reference to the national office. Of grave concern.

**Mark Wadsworth:** Regarding BIA: I get more feedback when I have questions for the BIA through my regional office. Maybe we should send the invite to the regional office instead of the national.

**Linda Cronin:** Reorganization in process, trying to get a meeting with BIA to bring up concerns, unofficially, along with the official process.

**Jerry McPeak:** We've had six years of this, and it hasn't changed. It's an open wound. BIA became the problem we couldn't get past. They need to be involved in this.

**Sarah Vogel:** The (Agriculture) Secretary would understand this issue. Maybe this should be opened up to a regional person who has expertise in working with the land as related to FSA, etc. Some people can handle getting through the barriers, someone who really knows what's going on and can give us insight as to the barrier.

### **3. Welcome to Council Member: Abby Cruz**

Welcome to Council. I am the Designated Federal Officer (DFO): Liaison between the Council and USDA.

### **4. Review of Meeting Materials: Josiah Griffin**

### **5. Civil Rights Update on Program Complaint Activity: Carl-Martin Ruiz**

The program side of the house: OASCR has been focusing on eliminating redundancy in the process and reducing the length of time it takes to process an employment complaint. Now, OASCR is shifting focus to the program side, looking at what occurs when a claim is filed against USDA alleging denial of a loan, program, etc., by working to eliminate redundancy and increase efficiency in how we process claims.

(Colleague) Anita Petty -When a complaint is filed alleging discrimination, we assess to see if we have jurisdiction over the claim, we accept it, we refer to our program Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) division to attempt to resolve prior to going through the entire adjudication process. That started in 2013.

Investigators gather facts, put together a report, and serve as a neutral person. They review records and request the agency in question produce statistical references to show comparative studies for impacts on the number of white applicants/Hispanics/Native Americans – which becomes part of the investigation.

Then, their report goes to the adjudication team, for legal analysis. If the facts show that discrimination occurred, they make a decision and give an Order of Relief. The agency and plaintiff have to come together to determine stipulations. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) side of the house makes all the rules. We follow those in making our determinations. We're not the monitor of the relief, nor the enforcers of the settlement agreement. The monitors do this.

The "Pulse of USDA" as it pertains to Native Americans:

In 2010- There were 5 complaints – FSA. 2016 - Claims are down. See handouts.

Ethnicity/Gender/Race/Age/Disability is a basis: there are the issues (where the person has been denied something on these bases).

Why is the green so high? These are in Oklahoma. There is an individual who is very active in talking to people, encouraging them to file a claim. A discrimination claim cannot be dismissed by us. We have to accept it, investigate, adjudicate, attempt to resolve it. It's resource-draining for us, but part of the process. We have to administer due process. I've

asked our adjudicators to determine that if something did go wrong, even if it wasn't discrimination, to put it in writing so that something can be done.

(Last slide): Employment complaints by Native Americans. Blue: Formal complaints in the department (total) (orange plus green). Orange: All other agencies. Green: FS = Forest Service. There may be informal complaints filed that may be resolved before the formal process. If they allege discrimination, it goes through us.

**Jim Radintz:** ADR process allows us to provide a much more timely resolution of EEOC complaints for people.

**Jerry McPeak:** How do you feel about whether "Progress made?" A little, a lot? In the area - number of complaints (not sure what that tells you...since one guy can skew it)...

**Carl-Martin Ruiz:** Some agencies have done better to make accessibility to programs available, which has lowered the number of complaints. There are a couple of agencies that need a more effective way - USDA needs to be more accessible, but unless people hear about it...

**Jerry McPeak:** Communicating only via email cuts out people over 40 (years old)!

**Jim Radintz:** I feel like we're doing a lot better. Trying to make things more accessible, being more sensitive to what the needs are and what the challenges are in Indian Country. We've made efforts to improve accessibility and our employees understanding. Employees didn't know/didn't understand working with BIA and some of those challenges. What we've been able to put in place is capacity - we have the network in place and know how to reach out to get past/work through that. In the past we didn't have that capability there. Still have issues and challenges, but improved the number of complaints is somewhat of an indicator of the improvement. This Council has had a role in that, helping us gain knowledge and improve sensitivity.

**Jerry McPeak:** I agree. The people at this Council are the ones who can tell you whether things are better.

**Jimmy Bramblett:** Given the litigation from the late 2000s, we've done a much better job, but have areas that are hit and miss. Sovereign government-to-government relationships create opportunities for enhanced communication. At NRCS, we have our own language, which creates difficulties in communication. Two-fold responsibility: respect/communication (understanding better what we are saying and how it's interpreted). Inside the agency, we went from purely technical assistance organization (biologists, engineers, scientists) and made them program managers, who didn't necessarily understand the one-to-one relationships. We have a lot to do internally, too. We're doing better and have a good plan for getting better.

**Sherry Crutcher:** How's the hiring freeze? It's put a halt to the positions that would benefit. No communication with tribes where NRCS is concerned. FSA does communicate. Lack of help to communities and individuals.

**Jimmy Bramblett:** No doubt: NRCS recently has been given guidance on expectations between now and 2019 – we're ramping back up our process on hiring. Now in the mode (attrition happens too, not re-hiring for all of these).

**Sherry Crutcher:** Still see a big gap in communication. We only have two engineers working with us in the whole state of Nevada.

**Jimmy Bramblett:** Exactly. We ask ourselves "Should we hire more engineers in Nevada?" We're doing a national workload analysis, to reallocate resources as needed.

**Mark Wadsworth:** I see positive effects of outreach and education, how we need to deliver that to our people/producers. We've come a long way. Not reaching into the NW, our youth are not aware of what we're doing.

**Linda Cronin:** FSA outreach in my background: Cross-training on outreach/collaborating, so we have a better understanding – we know enough to know where to bring people. "Bridges to Opportunity" is another platform to help: local service center connect people to the agencies and resources they need.

**Carl-Martin Ruiz:** If you have suggestions on how to effectively communicate: people may not have access to email, etc. Recommendations on how to better get the message out, please raise those.

**Gilbert Louis:** In New Mexico, they went out to the communities and started bringing printers and laptops to the rural areas – it is working! (At events.)

**Sherry Crutcher:** We're 100 miles from nowhere. One of the agencies has looked into texting to people's phones about the programs. But a key person in our tribe who has the trust of the producers, that brings those people in to your office, and do it all from there by internet. The offices come out to the reservation regularly. People gain trust in those individuals. Hands on. The programs are finding a way to reach out to our producers.

**Roselyn Yazzie:** Navajo Nation - we take the information to the community. We have 23,000 square miles. USDA and NRCS - has two people to cover that area, so their presence is very limited. We've taken the info we receive and sent it through the 110 chapters (distribution through the Navajo Nation) so they get the information and can distribute it to their community.

**Jerry McPeak:** Four years ago this conversation would not have happened. DC talked *at* us. The program wasn't set up for the first couple of years. This is all good, but recognize this isn't the way it was. The newer members need to learn what we had to learn, the history, or we'll lose something.

## 6. Farm Service Agency – Farm Loan Program Update: Jim Radintz

**Jim Radintz:** Three key areas:

- Farm Loans
- Farm Support Programs
- Commodity Operations: i.e. Cotton/peanuts etc. you can get a marketing loan for
  - Have 2100 service centers around the country. Reorganization going on.
  - FSA and NRCS will be moved together, trying to look at a “one stop shop” for producers.

**Sherry Crutcher:** Be aware of issues of “Who’s the boss” between FSA and NRCS in a situation like that.

**Jimmy Bramblett:** We each have specific roles/missions/responsibilities...this should not happen.

**Jerry McPeak:** But she’s saying what *happened*, not what DC is saying is *supposed* to happen.

**Jimmy Bramblett:** The scenario - individuals can create that experience, but it’s not designed to be that way. Neither is supposed to lead, we’re supposed to complement each other.

**Sherry Crutcher:** Lack of efficiency, finger-pointing. It could lead to bigger problems. Just an FYI.

**Jim Radintz:** That is a challenge we could face. We’ve seen significant increase for loan program demand. Fiscal year ending 2016 was record-setting. Broke *all* our records \$6.3B around the country – 39,800+ loans. We made the most farm-ownership loans ever, the most to beginning famers ever and the most to underserved producers ever. See charts.

Current funding chart: Running 9 percent behind last year in loan demand (9 percent off of a record, still a high demand). Just crossed the \$5B loan activity. Projected to go to \$5.7B. Most telling chart: The “mountain” chart: How much the FSA loan portfolios have grown. Started out at \$15bb, now close to \$25B. Increase of 1/3 or better.

Our agency staff resources are flat or declining during that time. Resource constraints. Good news: page 5 – how our portfolios are performing.

Beginning farmers (high risk) but from FSA perspective, they are performing better than our portfolios as a whole.

Microloans- had some internal issues because it required a cultural change in our loan employees, who could think, “Not as much paperwork or collateral is required, so this will be a disaster.” The micro loans are performing *better* than our portfolios as a whole. Generally, new/beginning and underserved producers have participated in this program. 89 percent of microloans went to people in one of those groups. Success in outreach by agency: 59 percent of the microloan recipients were new to FSA.

Launched a real estate, micro-lending program: FSA seeing some success here. A lot of FSA traditional programs are funded through the Farm Bill.

Every year we have to have an appropriation from Congress, which dictates how much we’ll have to lend from year to year. If they don’t act or appropriate lower levels, that’s what we have to work with. At the end of fiscal 2016, we had \$140M of loans approved, but not the money to fund them.

**Gilbert Louis:** We would like to see an amount increase, since \$50k isn’t much. And banks won’t lend money on the reservation because the banks can’t come on to the reservation in case of default. If we could get that amount increased that helps the producers. Microloans, etc. The ranchers/family-owned farms, increase operating loans.

**Jim Radintz:** There is interest in that. Conversation going on today on the Hill about that.

**Sherry Crutcher:** The Farm Bill hasn’t even been looked at for the new year. We’re under the assumption that nothing’s being done for 2018 yet. We need communications

**Jim Radintz:** Congressional committees are already hearing Farm Bill.

**Erin Parker:** Youth Loans: 2301/\$5000 is the cap. I’d love to see numbers on how well you’re serving our young people.

**Jim Radintz:** I can get that for you.

**Jerry McPeak:** Gilbert, did you say people came *out* to you?

**Sherry Crutcher:** The waiting is the problem. You wait a year. Lack of people.

**Jimmy Bramblett:** Agency’s made a commitment to “conservation planning,” keenly aware of this particular issue.

**Jim Radintz:** On page 6, chart at top showing statistics. FSA loan programs provides 6 percent of agriculture loans in the country. But this is a breakdown of producers and categories. “Small Part-Time Farmers” (sell less than \$100K in farm products and are part time), etc.

17 percent of the \$350k-1M in sales farms get FSA financing. 13 percent of large farms get FSA financing. It’s critical that our programs get adequate funding due to the number of people who depend on us to run their operation. Tab 7 (chart): Borrower caseload by race breakdown: Of the producers who met the criteria listed at the top) – percentage of population being served by FSA loans.

**Sarah Vogel:** *So impressive.* Great job!

**Jim Radintz:** Little book... “Your Guide to FSA Loans.” Originally to communicate what is available through FSA. It’s been updated to include microloan programs and changes to the Farm Bill and is at the printers now.

Also coming: A Borrower’s Guide. The FSA Farm Loan Compass, to help you find your way through. The guide explains how we calculate interest, what to do if you can’t make a payment, and what FSA can do to restructure loans. It’s very conversational in tone, we wrote it like we would explain it to someone, not in legalese.

Plan: everyone who gets a loan will get this, along with some 30,000+ who received loans in the past few years. It’s the first time all of this is all in one place.

**Abby Cruz:** It was recommended by the Council to send one to *every* loan borrower (83,000+). You’ve proposed sending one to everyone who has received a loan in the past two years. What are the Council’s thoughts? Will this be enough to close out this recommendation?

**Sarah Vogel:** Getting it to new borrowers and those within the past two years is a good plan. I think that would close the issue for me. Microloan program growth has really increased. This is a good start.

**Jerry McPeak:** I agree. Our newspapers in the rural areas are an important source of news. Alive and well.

**Jim Radintz:** We’re going to do a press release [regarding the guides].

The FSA Highly Fractioned Land Program: In the last Farm Bill, flexibilities have allowed it to be framed as a relending program, so an organization can address these issues. In FY16, \$10M was allotted, and we anticipate approving another \$10mm for 2017 when I get back to Washington.

**Mark Wadsworth:** Designed for individual tribal members to get a loan to buy their portion of that property within the allotment. The big dispute is the interest rate.

**Jim Radintz:** The Secretary's response to that letter has been drafted. The issue with the interest rate is the way government budget guidelines work, we'd need an appropriation of funding but didn't get that in 2016, so the interest rate charged has to support the government's cost of the loan over its life. In 2017, we're working on that. It is higher than the FSA. Each one of our loan programs are appropriated separately, so we can't mix and match. It's appropriations law and how we have to operate under it.

## 7. Hearing from Native Youth Regarding the Future of Food and Agriculture

### Student Introductions

**Council Introductions** - Commending students for their passion and drive to make a difference.

Discussion Begins:

**Erin Parker:** How can we help you with your ambitions and goals?

- Ag should be more accessible in the city
- Teach students that agriculture is a career. Educate them on what they need to know.
- Many kids go home from a summit or other agriculture programs with all this information that they don't really know how to use it, so it would be helpful if they had someone backing them up. Especially if that someone was a person in a higher up position such as the Council members.
- Education is key; teaching kids that these issues are a legitimate thing is a big deal; awareness:
  - Food sovereignty needs to be talked about and used as an educational tool
- Youth involvement needs to be more of a priority.
- Targeting more rural areas (smaller reservations) would be a positive move because a lot of the time they get swept under the rug and forgotten.
- Need more programs for youth to get involved in... other than 4-H and FFA.
- Get the younger kids involved as well... maybe have programs specifically for them.

**Jerry McPeak:** A lot of kids leave the reservation to go get an education and then don't come back. Not everything is equal.

**Sherry Crutcher:** Find an adult to support you. To receive a youth loan, you just must have an adult and must be at least 10 years old.

**Angela Peter:** Alaska back in the day didn't have any kind of agriculture and now look at where they are. Find a way to get to your goals.

**Mark Wadsworth:** The reason you are here is because there was discrimination against Native Americans. We are in the only country in the world that doesn't need to rely on exports because we have all the resources we need. You students are the ones who are going to have to be ready for the time in the next 60 years to provide food, because the ratio of people to food will not be equal.

**Linda Cronin:** Thank you for all your commitment and leadership that you have brought.

## 8. Public Comment Period

Mark Wadsworth reads pre-submitted letter.

**Jim Radintz:** In response to the letter, I can say that I am not able to treat this request favorably.

**Sarah Vogel:** I think we should add capacity to FFA and 4-H programs and it needs to be labeled urgent.

**Jerry McPeak:** A lot of state funding and funding of public schools goes into those programs and tribes aren't using the funding for the programs. It's up to them what to use it for and it's just not a top priority with the tribe, so that's their decision. If the tribe won't prioritize your program, do something to raise the money yourself. Don't expect the tribes to action. You should go to them and tell them what you want and why it's important.

**Mark Tilsen - Tanka Bar President:** There's a market trend that involves grass-fed beef and buffalo. Buffalo loans are very small and most of the focus is on grass-fed beef. The result is the native producer gets left behind.

**Jerry McPeak:** The solution is a loan program has its first payback after 30 months for the buffalo instead of earlier like the grass-fed beef?

**Mark Tilsen:** There's a financial gap between conventional and grass-fed cattle.

**Karli Moore:** Her home county in North Carolina is very diverse and has no Native American representation on the farm credit boards.

**Jim Radintz:** USDA doesn't have direct control - FSA has a relation with farm credit. He will relay these concerns to them.

**Angela Peter:** State of Alaska does not recognize federally recognized tribes. They don't exist. Another hurdle we face.

**Jimmy Bramblett:** Bob Jones is the State Conservationist: how difficult it is to follow Federal policies, when culturally, the state policies are different.

**Angela Peter:** Most villages are sovereign, also very remote. No land is set aside for tribal hunting, etc. That land belongs to everybody *but* the tribes, including the corporations. Very challenging.

Food security - Villages may be bound in for a month in winter. Food security is important. TCDs and long-distance learning programs, with our youth. Want to work with Janie on that.

***PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD ENDED HERE.***

**Abby Cruz:** Alaska for a Council meeting? We'll consider the variables, including budget. Which month is best – August?

## **9. CNAFR Working Session**

**Mark Wadsworth:** Each sub-committee chair will cover what the committee is working on.

### **Subcommittee Read Out and Discussion**

#### **Land Management Subcommittee**

**Sherry Crutcher** Conference Call: Left notes at home.

**Mark Wadsworth:** Sarah Vogel was helpful with opening up the allotments through the Forest Service for Native American people to participate. Group without the land base needed to expand because of need for grazing. Wanted us to communicate with the BLM and the Forest Service that they had leases.

**Sarah Vogel:** Forest Service requires ownership in base land. Office of General Counsel Opinion that says that trust land is not owned land. If it's an Opinion it will list the laws, etc. We have not seen that. The Federal government is the Trustee for the Indians, who own the land. We're waiting for the written basis for this conclusion. If the only basis for this is that Indians don't own their land...very problematic if that's the rationale. We've been digging into this. Carl's predecessor did a lot of digging, very helpful. FS has been quite evasive.

**Abby Cruz:** I will find the email, cc everyone, and re-start the dialogue.

**Roselyn Yazzie:** There are 2-3 individuals I spoke with, and there are several allotments that were open. You had to go to it, submit your application, go through the process, and then depending on availability of forage, they'd contact you. We asked several ranchers to go through the process to see if they can get anything. I was told you have already ranchers

adjacent to a lot of those allotments. The ranchers have those allotments, passed down through generations. You have to talk to the ranchers to see if they are going to pass them down to their kids.

**Sarah Vogel:** We need to get their rationale. The habit has been... It's locked up. It's going to be passed down to kids, etc. In 1920's when leasing started, those grazing associations were *not letting Indians in*. De facto discrimination, has the effect of discrimination.

**Mark Wadsworth:** This is a barrier to our people and we need to find out why. We are in a situation in some states, tribal demand for conservation is exceeding the amount set aside.

Question: Do we have in other states where there are the same money but less demand, can those dollars be transferred over?

**Jimmy Bramblett:** EQIP has hundreds of pots, not one big one. Virtually every state has more demand than supply. Once we make an allocation out to the states, we do an assessment and reallocate as necessary.

**Sherry Crutcher:** In Nevada due to prices on rural land, cost assessments weren't meeting the cost requirements of the location. Our key focus, the rural counties.

**Jimmy Bramblett:** There are different pay rates based on economic research services (18 across the country). National economists come up with standardized prices for regions of the country. If those costs are not the appropriate costs to get this off the ground, we need the documentation so we can make the necessary adjustments. Getting things to remote areas are much different than to urban areas.

Do you have any details I can take back with me?

**Sherry Crutcher:** Nevada, WY, Idaho, AZ were collaborating on this.

**Jimmy Bramblett:** I will ask my folks to see if they know any of this, which scenarios, practices.

**Sherry Crutcher:** Mostly EQIP: water troughs, stock tanks, irrigation, piping, etc.

**Jimmy Bramblett:** I'll shoot it up to the national economists, and if you can give me details that would be great.

**Mark Wadsworth:** Navajo Irrigation System tried to get a cement ditch, and the cost of the ditch compared to the engineered prices was way out of line.

**Credit and Credit Desert Subcommittee**

**Sarah Vogel:** One of our big desires for this subcommittee was for this book that Jim Radintz brought... so we can say that the books are done/recommendation closed. Some things in the communication area, Center for Indian Country development, asking Jim Radintz to do so. Keeping bankers aware of Indian needs. We felt a lot of our recommendations had been implemented. Some things are in process or awaiting a response, like the RS recommendation.

We wanted to highlight to the FSA that these credit mediation programs all over the country be tooled up and ready because of the low prices and now the drought. Jim, maybe you can refresh people on how many certified mediation programs there are across the country.

**Jim Radintz:** 41 as of today. Georgia now has one. The total for fiscal 2017 \$3.9 mm.

**Mark Wadsworth:** Wasn't there supposed to be an online application?

**Jim Radintz:** On drawing board, but don't have IT funding for significant development. We intend to launch an online inquiry system. Access online, when last payment was made, how much is due, when, etc. This system is scheduled to be up and running before the end of the calendar year. These are wish list items, but funding is limited for new IT systems.

## **Youth and Education Subcommittee**

**Jerry McPeak:** To help the youth is to help over a long period of time. We didn't propose a resolution, but to encourage whoever it is who controls the funding to keep funding the youth. We take care of our youth and of our elders, all of us, regardless of tribe. Don't lose sight of the youth.

**Mark Wadsworth:** Who's the 1994 person?

**Abby Cruz:** Lawrence Shorty

## **Food Security and Administration**

**Erin Parker:** We have not met. Recommendations you see on the recommendation matrix rest upon placing people in jobs, and those jobs are not yet filled. That is beginning to happen. I will pull subcommittee members aside and discuss times while we're here.

**Shannon McDaniel:** Volunteered to join Youth and Education Subcommittee and the Food Security Subcommittee.

**Margaret Goode:** Volunteered for Youth and Education Subcommittee and Land Management Subcommittee.

**Mark Wadsworth:** Can Erin stay the Chair for administration, and Shannon, could you be chair for Food Security? (Done)

**Sarah Vogel:** Update on the lawsuit. DC Court of Appeals, 1.5 months ago, a 2-1 decision. Two said settlement was appropriate, within the law. The Dissent said all the money should go back to the Federal government, which we have been worried about. The two that lost the appeal have now asked for a 9-judge panel review in DC Court of Appeals. They asked for our response. We don't think it's necessary and that the other should be upheld. When that is over, then next step would be a potential appeal to the Supreme Court. There are other currents floating around now. House Judiciary Committee has written to Sessions, saying he should never allow the funds. US Chamber of Commerce do not like leftover funds from class actions, and someone from the institute wrote a paper to the Judiciary Committee- they're gearing up.

This is the situation. It's a little nerve wracking. We don't have friends on the Judiciary Committee. The case could go on a while longer.

There's no way to add anyone on. 60+ people missed the deadline through no fault of their own. We asked that they be considered, and the judge said no. People who appealed thought all the money should go to the claimants. The trial judge didn't approve that, the Appeals panel didn't approve it.

**Sherry Crutcher:** Made motion to recess.

**Erin Parker:** Seconded.

**Mark Wadsworth:** Recessed. See you tomorrow at 8 a.m.

**Council for Native American Farming and Ranching**  
**Friday, July 21, 2017**  
**University of Arkansas, Fayetteville**

**1. Call to Order and Roll Call: Mark Wadsworth**

**Call to order 8:15 a.m.**

**Members present:** Mark Wadsworth, Angela Peter, Erin Parker, Jerry McPeak, Shannon McDaniel, Roselyn Yazzie, Gilbert Louis III, Sarah Vogel, Margaret Goode, Sherry Crutcher, Jim Radintz for Chris Beyerhelm (FSA), Carl-Martin Ruiz for Winona Lake Scott (OCR), Linda Cronin, Jimmy Bramblett for Leonard Jordan (NRCS). Tawney Brunch is the only member not present (pre-arranged).

We do have a quorum.

**2. Blessing: Roselyn Yazzie**

**3. Review of Agenda: Abby Cruz**

**4. Review of Meeting Materials: Josiah Griffin**

**5. Indian Country Farm Bill Discussion Janie Hipp/Zach Ducheneaux**

**Janie Hipp:** Here as Director of UA School of Law's IFAI (Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative). Work across Indian Country on a variety of issues. We do the youth event every year. Among our Partners, USDA, Mazon, etc. We've worked seamlessly with Intertribal Ag Council (IAC) for 20 years working together.

Seeds of Native Health Campaign: Indian Country economic development, etc. They approached us about a model food and ag code. We have that under way. It's not going to be just a couple of pages. Wide range of topics, meant to be a service to tribes who wish to take it (without the financial and time exposure). We have food law experts (land use, agritourism, marketing, food safety etc.). Mazon was a partner with Shakopee.

It's a foundation for a larger piece of work. Tribal governments, organizations, non-profits to have as strong a voice as possible in future Farm Bills. Report: Regaining our Future. You've seen how various titles of the Farm Bill interconnect. In pulling this together, an explanatory document, title by title, what each of the titles encompass in the Farm Bill. In each title discussion, tried to lay out the breadth and scope of the Farm Bill. Most don't realize how broad it is.

**Zach Ducheneaux:** Janie mentioned the idea was to muster tribal support. What's lacking is the ability to get the attention of tribal leadership in the discussion. We want to make it really easy for them to focus some time on this, so he can then have that discussion with his delegation on the Hill. Easier to put emphasis on this needed suite of services with tribal leader support.

**Janie Hipp:** So we laid it out as through you were reading it for the first time. Like, "Why Should Indian Country care?"

The latter part of each title section, what NCAI has already put on record for recommendations in the most recent Farm Bill, and recommendations that have not been addressed in Farm Bills.

Potential Opportunities: A call to heightened understanding, exploration of the opportunities that are still out there for Indian Country food and agriculture.

Lifting up those areas where USDA needs the intense partnership with BIA, or there won't be work done. Inter-department cooperation.

**Jerry McPeak:** Notice BIA is not here.

**Zach Ducheneaux:** Conspicuously absent, frustrating.

**Jerry Peak:** Not a great proponent of resolutions, but since we are having a change of personnel, what can we do?

**Zach Ducheneaux:** We need participation from BIA to really thoughtfully address Indian Country issues. Send it to the Secretary.

**Janie Hipp:** Under Obama, we had a directive to work interdepartmentally to surface the issues and solve them between departments.

Send a resolution to the new Secretary to encourage inter-department coordination.

**Jerry McPeak:** I think the new guy will listen. He doesn't know. Hasn't been here.

**Sherry Crutcher:** This is to be presented towards the Farm Bill? How are we interacting with Washington, or are we?

**Zach Ducheneaux:** Suggestions: Take this as a tool back to your community and spread it broadly. Help us convey the importance to national leaders. What we need to drive home, 1 *trillion* dollar stimulus package that can really help change the poverty issue in Indian Country.

**Sherry Crutcher:** When I explain this document...what's my introduction to my Chairman?

**Zach Ducheneaux:** We can come and visit with him if you can make that meeting happen. Shakopee is willing to put money on the table to take the effort forward to Congressional delegation. Educate Congress on how important this is to Indian Country (Farm Bill).

**Janie Hill:** Mechanics: We are available. We'll come talk through the issue with leadership. It's a large document, but so is the Farm Bill. Our staff attorneys are going through the title sections and doing a series of 1-3 pagers max so someone can look at it quickly. Will do a series of briefings for your leaders, in person/webinar as well. To continue to roll out the understanding of the components of the Farm Bill and how they fit together.

**Sherry Crutcher:** We just need the right way to present it. Thank you.

**Janie Hipp:** We're already fielding questions from tribal government - statistics of usage of programs as well as interpretations that apply to their particular area of concern. Attorneys and research assistants working on this.

**Zach Ducheneaux:** Major initiative: bring some parity on livestock (50 percent of the production, 60 percent of the value in Indian Country). There is no parity in livestock risk management tools. We have some ideas on those.

**Angela Peter:** Timeline for this? So we can take it back and get the word out. Alaska is so big. Do we suggest events for you to attend?

**Janie Hipp:** Yes.

**Zach Ducheneaux:** Timeline - the Hill/Ag Committee level already having some talks. We will come to events or have staff come out or brief you. We'll do our best to educate our partners.

**Janie Hipp:** The time to get involved is *now*. We will have resources, building a core national steering committee to have a coherent presence. Our initiative is partnering-beginning in August, Food Policy Roundtables, all over the country. We'll be present at as many intertribal...we need your help to get space on the agendas.

**Angela Peter:** It's hard for Alaska to understand how this is good for them. Do you have any media? Like a disc?

**Janie/Zach** – Yes. We'll email you the link, and it's online too.

People think it doesn't apply to them and it *does*.

**Jimmy Bramblett:** Context with respect to timeline: House Ag Committee next week - we'll be visiting with them about other proposals from other groups.

**Abby Cruz:** The document is linked on agenda and also in the materials I emailed out. And if you Google it, it also comes up.

**Erin Parker:** I just emailed the link to everyone.

**Sarah Vogel:** Compliments to you, Janie and Zach, for doing this. Question: Are there key members of House/Senate Ag Committees who are already aware of this, interested in this, champions for this?

**Zach Ducheneaux:** Need some champions, but *have* shared it as Indian Country's initiative. This is the first real focused effort on the part of Indian Country specifically as to what we need from the Farm Bill. Congressman Conway (Texas) has some eyes on this.

**Janie Hipp:** Senator Franken has been in conversation with us about nutrition issues/feeding issues. I have a feeling this is going to be very important for tribal leadership to be involved, but to also push on the things that are important to constituents as well, eyes on the whole, supportive of the whole is going to be very important through the process.

**Sarah Vogel:** This is perhaps the most important thing we as a Council can do to move it along.

**Zach Ducheneaux:** A few months to do all of this. And this is where we are starting. We want feedback from everyone who looks it over, to make changes, to make it as easy as possible to get it considered.

**Janie Hipp:** In your folders: the slide deck. We can send it to you electronically that was done mid-year NCAI for the rollout. Tackles it title by title, looks at the finer points. As we refine, we can send to entire Council, keep communication open.

**Linda Cronin:** Yes, and I want to underscore that everyone should go over the slides.

**Janie Hipp:** Those young people need you to advance as many resolutions as you can to the Secretary. We can't afford to lose any of the components. They are at Quapaw today. They have to see that these are parts of USDA that are critical parts - so that they can stay home have a good life.

**Zach Ducheneaux:** We've been asked: Top 3 priorities?

FRTEP: Absolute priority to maintain engagement with these young people when they get home, to maintain that leadership pipeline.

Quapaw: Has the benefit of the money factory on the interstate. Pine Ridge doesn't have the resources. Initiatives: The waiver of the match requirement at the discretion of the Secretary when he feels it's appropriate. Rural Development title is where you'll find it. 638 funds don't apply to a slaughter facility/but the match...

**Janie Hipp:** You could do a resolution to explore that opportunity. That's a question for General Counsel, engaging them in the conversation regarding legal question. The agencies may want to do it, but if General Counsel doesn't give them an interpretation they can use, they may not be able to.

**Jerry McPeak:** No skin in the game, no appreciation. I hope we're looking for some way - labor? Folks without a job, put a shovel in their hand. For the long term success of this, feed the bear long enough, and the bear doesn't know how to hunt. Extremely important that the people have something in it. Have some way that the tribe participates. Take away their participation and their risk, but short term solution - don't give fish, teach him to fish. But he needs a pole. But that guy has to *do* it.

**Sherry Crutcher:** Help Indian Country find a way to succeed.

**Janie Hipp:** When we get calls from tribal leadership (because they're intrigued), I ask them "What is your plan, and do you have a department within your tribal structure to deal with this?" etc. That's what they need to do. Our young people who are already writing budgets...I'm begging you...we cannot wait until future Farm Bills, we have to do it *now*. What Quapaw is doing can be replicated everywhere with some tweaks. These young people are ready to *go*, ready to be in the game, and they aren't even out of high school. We need to put some muscle behind it. Rural America won't survive unless we survive.

**Zach Ducheneaux:** Bring risk management tools that the rest of America has been using for decades, and bring it to Indian Country.

**Janie Hipp:** Overarching point: Specific pieces of the Farm Bill need to be tweaked and fixed. In this document, conversation on "How can we look at this differently?" Food Distribution Program in Indian Country. Deconstruct that infrastructure, regional purchasing, and distributions. What if more Native foods were included? There's language in the Farm Bill that pushes people to that. This would build our agriculture. A collaboration that won't happen overnight. "What if" we actually looked at things slightly differently to deal with issues like hunger.

**Sherry Crutcher:** On farmer/rancher side (page 43). Rural areas. The ‘100 miles to the reservation’ prices aren’t taken into account, so it’s not worth getting into EQIP. Doesn’t benefit anyone in a rural area, so same thing as you’re talking about. Find key wording,

**Zach Ducheneaux:** More regionally conscious. Aggregation of the average prices comes from too broad an area. Is that something that can be done in regulation or a Farm Bill adjustment?

**Jimmy Bramblett:** Answer for this particular issue: we can put in the components of a scenario that helps accommodate - not sure if we can do it for FY 2018.

**Janie Hipp:** As we do these food policy roundtables, we’re doing notes from each one, and we’ll send them on to you.

**Shannon McDaniel:** We can’t wait on the Farm Bill. We can share best practices. Pecan trees; we planted 2000, at the end of the year, the question was “Why’d you only plant 2000?” ...it was because we didn’t know the margins! We can share that kind of information. Deciding what you’re going to grow and stick with it. We retain ownership all the way through the feedlot, not to a slaughterhouse yet, but doing a feasibility study now. Share those models of what’s working. Now we’re in the beef business, not just the cattle business. Look at what we could retain. We need to share these models with each other.

**Mark Wadsworth:** When we 638’d the range program in 1993, that budget they gave us to run 33k acres was \$184k. That gets you a manager, secretary, half a truck. I had \$25k to manage it. Started using EQIP, rotated the situation, slowly growing what we had to work with. Council put more tribal money into it. Now \$900k per year budget. That’s getting things done, and we have improved our land. The tribe *has* skin in the game. Maybe we deserve a hand up at this point. Parity.

**Janie Hipp:** What I have seen – what kind of business entities there are in rural areas. An administrative notice to tribes, no one had ever explained how that business fit the exact definition of what was in the Farm Bill. Only two tribes got any money under the Farm Bill, what is allowed and how tribal governance fits in. Knowledge of how tribes function. We have to keep after this. Most of the time the Farm Bill isn’t written for us. We will keep you up to date and advised as we do these roundtables.

**Sarah Vogel:** Top three priorities? What is number 3?

**Zach Ducheneaux:** To maintain the gains we’ve achieved in EQIP and conservation.

**Janie Hipp:** ...and number 4 is out how to make these feeding programs hum, to be using agriculture produced by us, so that in a decade, we will be feeding ourselves. It’ll fuel local

food production and our farmers and ranchers. Keep in mind the vulnerable people in our communities.

## 6. CNAFR Working Session

- Discuss Council goals for 2016-18 membership term
- Council issues and topics

Council Goals for 2016-18 Membership Term:

**Carl-Martin Ruiz:** (Office of Civil Rights) Update: Got a response back from base property question: Sent OGC a note, asked for status regarding base property issue. I got a response:

(Read the response.)

For Forest Service - still in same place as last year, until there is a revision, Trust lands do not meet “owned.” (This was from OGC -Rick Gibson.) That is the status. Where things were before. Forest prior to Administration changes, things were being worked on, but status is still rather unclear.

**Abby Cruz:** I want to make sure that our wires aren’t being crossed, because I’m working on this too – but not with Rick Gibson. I’ve been working with Alan Rowley (Forest Service) and Ron Mulach from OGC and appear to have gotten different messaging than you.

**Sarah Vogel:** When OGC develops an Opinion, there’s usually a query that will be presented, an analysis, case law, regulations, provisions, and there will be a document that’s a few pages long, not just the conclusion. This Council needs that document, and if there isn’t one, there needs to be one made. How did you get there?

**Linda Cronin:** We will work with the attorneys to get one. [Abby has already reached out and inquired regarding this.]

**Sarah Vogel:** Not an email, but the actual Opinion. Maybe that opinion was reached 20 years ago. I’d like to see the opinion, to understand the basis for it. It seems dissonant with the duties of the Feds with regard to the Trust duties and discrimination.

**Jimmy Bramblett:** Regarding BIA and their lack of presence. NRCS has been negotiating a Memo of Understanding with them and the Forest Service. This topic has come up there too, agreed that NRCS would share that draft. Review it and get back to us with any comments in a timely fashion, by middle of August.

**Linda Cronin:** MOU expires in late August. We need feedback within the next week.

**Jimmy Bramblett:** For clarity, get those back to Abby, and she will feed them back to us.

**Sarah Vogel:** You're sending those out to us? Will they be renegotiated?

**Linda Cronin:** There have been some changes, so yes, that's what we'll be sharing, the draft.

It will be detrimental to operations (data sharing etc. in the MOU between USDA/FSA/etc.) if we don't have something in place.

**Sarah Vogel:** Federal agencies cannot work on all Indian reservations - that BIA has exclusive jurisdiction over all Indian reservations? So this is disturbing, the BIA doesn't see themselves like that. If it's impairing services to Indian Country. I'm not aware of any law that says that.

**Jimmy Bramblett:** USDA is a pretty amazing Department. There's logic on how the internal departments complement each other. Isn't it the Department of Interior that regulates BIA regarding all the different types of land ownership in Indian Country? We work in concurrence with BIA on these issues.

**Linda Cronin:** More about the control of the land.

**Sarah Vogel:** Prior to 1997, NRCS had to be 'hands off' the reservations, and then they were able to do an MOU with tribes. So much catch-up work to be done by NRCS. Prior to '90s, permission was needed from BIA. It should be clarified within the NRCS. Waiting for permission from the BIA when you cannot even get a phone call return?

**Jimmy Bramblett:** This is a National Council. We have to constantly keep in mind that we think of a solution across the board, but we have over 500 government-to-government relationships: we have a lot of catch up activities to do.

**Mark Wadsworth:** Goals to attain. We have more questions about the land base than we have answers at this point.

Question on NRCS's ability to work with BIA, don't know the statutory requirement it came from, someone needs to do research on that for us.

**Linda Cronin:** It's also about data sharing.

**Jerry McPeak:** I don't understand the proclamation. Goal: Does this Council have to exist?

**Sarah Vogel:** No.

**Jerry McPeak:** No funding for this Council.

**Linda Cronin:** Funding comes from USDA agencies.

**Jerry McPeak:** Not part of the deal, if you don't like a program, you don't have to kill it, just starve it to death. We all need to understand that it doesn't break a law if this Council does not exist, and there *could* be no funding for it, and that's not a reach for that to occur.

**Abby Cruz:** I believe the Council expires September 5, 2018.

**Jerry McPeak:** You have a year. Maybe more. There's a possibility that this Council won't exist. This is not a time to be timid. State short and long term goals. Don't discuss minutia. Discuss broader concepts that need to happen, like the BIA issue.

**Josiah Griffin:** Council was established – the Secretary is able to reestablish and appoint Council members on a discretionary basis. Whether or not after 2018... the Secretary has discretion.

**Mark Wadsworth:** If we are doing this new Farm Bill, a provision that mimics this, we then don't have to rely upon the Secretary's whim every two years.

**Josiah Griffin:** There are advisory committees that are maintained via statute. If the Farm Bill had a provision requiring council...funding etc., it would be mandated by Congress.

**Erin Parker:** Can we start articulating some priority goals today? Or a resolution? Feel a sense of urgency. I will get Federal Advisory Act for us on break.

**Angela Peter:** Need a foundation so the new Council doesn't come in and say 'So what are we doing?' every time. Maybe a matrix or a document so that they can look at what has been done quickly, not just read minutes. You should read the minutes, but look at a document.

**Erin Parker:** Recommendation matrix is that document.

**Linda Cronin:** Tab 4, a tracker of all recommendations that the Council has made. We could look at doing it differently if needed.

**Sherry Crutcher:** Has this document been updated from our meeting from December? I don't see anything about the land issues on there.

**Abby Cruz:** I've moved recommendation 39 to the "completed" section and added notes, etc. It is not perfect. I do want to clarify... It's meant to be a quick snapshot. I agree with you: it's a living document. It's long, meaty. If you say "These five are the ones we want you to tackle right now," I will! Task me with that, ask me what the status is, why it hasn't moved, etc.

**Sarah Vogel:** I love this document. It could be improved: “In process...” That doesn’t elucidate what the process is, what the progress is. I’d rather see the progress. Like under Training Opportunities, it’d be nice to know detail. Could be a link, or a footnote. What are the barriers the staff is experiencing. Need a law change? Or “It’s done.”

**Abby Cruz:** Subcommittees, as you meet, continue to push. Ask me “What’s the status?”

**Erin Parker:** Large overarching goals...

Continue the Council: I make the motion to resolve to ask the Secretary to continue the Council beyond 2018.

**Sarah Vogel:** I second the motion, plus a friendly amendment, then loop back with the Farm Bill for a permanent advisory committee.

Continuation - add explore adding to Farm Bill to make this a permanent Statutory committee, this comprises 5 percent of all the land base in the US, and critical to the USDA.

**Mark Wadsworth:** Current Motion: Further discussion? Vote?

Motion passes.

**Erin Parker:** Next goal is youth. I move that the Secretary support Native youth through better access to programming.

**Sarah Vogel:** I second the motion.

**Mark Wadsworth:** Vote, motion passes.

**Erin Parker:** FFA and 4H- work interdepartmentally with Department of Education (with Agriculture?).

Motion: Encouraging Secretary Purdue and Secretary DeVos to get FFA chapters into rural and remote reservation communities that don’t have FFA, such a critical part of accessing knowledge and programs. Huge need in Alaska.

**Sherry Crutcher:** Are we asking them to work together or to *fund* it? We need to request some type of education funding to take that forward.

**Erin Parker:** Yes. States and tribes have the ability to access funds for that. And appropriate Federal funds. Develop partnerships.

**Jerry McPeak:** Federal and state funds are available. Sometimes the tribes want to use them in some other way. Schools have to choose: FFA, football coach, band, math teacher. So what you're asking for is more money than public schools get to fund the same thing.

**Sherry Crutcher:** Our school is a public school. 95 percent are natives. The FFA program doesn't get the funding. The choice is to send the kids to college. So how will we integrate the wording to help everyone who wants to be in FFA. It's not a decision by the kids, it is Congress.

**Jerry McPeak:** Local school board gets to decide.

**Sherry Crutcher:** Our local school board does not have a native member on the school board. Reality check.

**Sarah Vogel:** To the degree we need changes in Federal law, or having the Secretary use it as a bully pulpit, we may need a broadly written resolution with the expectation that we circle back with the team who's working on the Farm Bill, to get it into the Farm Bill. It's a more complex subject. Let's ask Erin to draft a suitably broad resolution to the Secretary.

**Jerry McPeak:** Second the motion.

**Erin Parker:** Amend to include Secretary of the Interior, BIA?

**Sarah Vogel:** Friendly amendment.

**Erin Parker:** Accept friendly amendment.

**Erin Parker:** Second the motion.

**Mark Wadsworth:** Vote: Motion Passes.

**Erin Parker:** 3<sup>rd</sup>: NIFA funding for 4H? Move that Secretary work with NIFA to increase funding for 4H funding for tribes.

**Jim Radintz:** 4H funding comes through USDA, but runs through the same process as cooperatives do. In most cases, there is a local funding commitment required to support those 4H agents. In most states, they're usually tied directly to 1860 or 1890 land grants. Purely within USDA's purview. Don't know how that would work. Somewhat like FRTEP and other extension type programs. The Secretary's support behind it would carry the day.

**Jerry McPeak:** Fully fund the FRTEP and youth programs, so it doesn't have to be funded every year.

**Erin Parker:** Mandatory appropriations for FRTEP? Let's use Sarah's language.

**Mark Wadsworth:** Every year FRTEP agents have to reapply, whereas extensions don't.

**Sarah Vogel:** Do you have specific language in this book, would you like to propose the language for a resolution, Zach?

**Zach Ducheneaux:** Fully fund FRTEP on an ongoing basis. Page 88 in the book. This year there are 6 existing programs, some in place since the late 1990s, that were not funded. "Fully fund FRTEP on an ongoing basis. Make it a non-competitive process."

**Sarah Vogel:** Should be funded at no less than \$10M annually. Let's use the same language.

**Erin Parker:** Move that we encourage the Secretary... Through a non-competitive process through a mandatory appropriation.

**Sarah Vogel:** Second

**Mark Wadsworth:** Vote. Motion passes.

**Jerry McPeak:** Sarah gave us an update on Keepseagle. Is there anything we can do to get it off dead center and try to preserve it? I want that as a goal. To help preserve the Keepseagle funds, that they not disappear or go for something other than what they were intended for, to help the American Indian people. Exert pressure in Washington. I believe this is heading that direction, the funds being set aside or used in a manner not intended. Language to help them make the right decision, to not let the funds stagnate or disappear

**Sarah Vogel:** Secretary of Agriculture - to the settlement agreement/amended settlement agreement - they're still on board. A potential resolution would be to support the Secretary in his support/position of helping the American Indian people, of the amended settlement agreement and use of the funds in the manner set for the in the amended settlement agreement. I could fill in the date. The danger is that there are people who want the money to go back to Treasury. Above all, we do not want the USDA or the Department of Justice to change their position. We have a settlement agreement. They agreed to it. "We urge the Secretary to continue his support of the amended settlement agreement of xyz date."

**Jerry McPeak:** Motion made to use that language.

**Margaret Goode:** Seconded.

**Mark Wadsworth:** Motion carries.

**Sarah Vogel:** May I insert the appropriate title of the Amended settlement agreement and the date?

**Abby Cruz:** To Sarah and Erin... please send me the draft language of the motions.

**Mark Wadsworth:** Next agenda item.

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## 7. Intertribal Agriculture Council Updates: Zach Ducheneaux

**Zach Ducheneaux:** Continue to work in Indian Country. Stressing the importance of the upcoming Ag census. We encourage recommendations from the Council. Loan terms aren't flexible enough for a youth who wants to buy three head of cattle and waiting 20 months to sell a box of beef in their community.

**Mark Wadsworth:** In February 2013, NASS had a recommendation to include subsistence farmers in their counts. You sit on the Council, have they explored that?

**Zach Ducheneaux:** I serve on Committee for Ag Statistics. Their regulations tied to \$1000 of Ag production. My best advice for subsistence producers: say "Normally I would have sold it, but had to eat it to survive."

**Angela Peter:** I will forward to you what I forwarded to them yesterday.

**Zach Ducheneaux:** (Continuing) Have some challenges in FSA in the youth loan program. USDA wants to complicate things. Approve a loan for three pairs of cattle, a production loan. We feel it's the same. The FSA should consider the application as submitted, then we can adjust applications as needed. The communication needs to approve.

We had 26 people sign up for CSPC contract renewal. Only six chose to go forward. Roll back that regulation and process to 2013 when we had lots of participation in this.

Rural Development: working in REAP stuff, in a holding pattern. We have staff in every region. Have confirmed funding through Sept. 30, 2017. We had hoped Keepseagle funds could be deployed to continue providing the services.

Reach out to me anytime. Abby can distribute my cell number to all of you.

**Jimmy Bramblett:** Conservation Stewardship program - this year, we had 19k applications. The restructuring has been popular. The example may be an impact of the demand and not the rules.

I'd suggest that we dig in and figure out what the issues are. May be related to the payment issues.

“Enhancements” that work in Indian Country have been eliminated or changed so that they're no longer worth applying.

Seamless transition from EQIP to graduating to CSPC. We need to make adjustments to pre-2013. We're committed to work with you through those issues.

**Erin Parker:** In December 2016, we made a recommendation (#46 on recommendation matrix) to the Secretary that you get a multi-year funding commitment to IAC technical staff – so you can retain staff. Status?

**Zach Ducheneaux:** Update: we are in an acute situation. No follow-up to that request, because that's a long term solution.

**Linda Cronin:** Update on that request and other outstanding - a letter was sent and now we are working with – letters are in the Secretary's office now for response and consideration.

**Sarah Vogel:** Letters approving funding, or requesting funding?

**Linda Cronin:** The recommendations the Council made to the Secretary, so they are responses to the funding for those.

**Sarah Vogel:** Possible to make and urgent recommendation to the Secretary for funding for the IAC? So many initiatives that will collapse without the IAC and their staff? If the funding is lost...

It seems to take too long for our recommendations to get to the Secretary. This request need to get to the Secretary's office *now*. For our constituents. Is that possible?

**Linda Cronin:** Underscoring the importance is very important. But the information *is* in the Secretary's office.

**Zach Ducheneaux:** The Farm Bill work will go forward. The network we use to get info from the producers is what is in danger of going away.

**Sarah Vogel:** That first year, Janie wanted those USDA agencies to *know* that this Council existed, to educate USDA of this important constituency. For a lot of agencies, this may have been the first time they'd thought about Native Americans.

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## 8. Office of Tribal Relations: Linda Cronin

**Linda Cronin:** We've been working on... Focusing in Indian Country, educate people on programs and services and navigate the process of USDA programs. USDA is a big circle, connections from one thing to another. Broad-based approach. Can be overwhelming and daunting. Training: Native American Working Group (NAWG) - collaborative approach. It's fairly well attended. More are showing up. All of USDA agencies are in it. General issues and subgroups. Increase understanding of working in Indian Country. The Council is an important part of the work we do.

We review the regulations that come through our office.

Open door policy, continue to be connected to our customers to the deepest level and getting feedback.

Let us know how we can serve and support you. Continue to take advantage of the time you have as a Council.

**Sarah Vogel:** White House Council for Native American Affairs is still meeting?

**Linda Cronin:** On hold, reformatting where the priorities and what direction it will go.

The Secretary's commitment to Indian Country. In the first month he was in office he went to South Dakota and met with tribal leaders and tribal college presidents. Working to set up consultations, a standing request on consultations right now, early discussion piece now, not waiting until later.

**Mark Wadsworth:** Linda, as to your monthly reports, can you email them to us, to keep our attention on this issue?

How can we assist you? Funding shortage, staffing issues?

**Linda Cronin:** We have three funding sources. Our funding has gone down by \$1000, so it's holding pretty solid.

We are bringing two staff in to work with us on details through the remainder of the fiscal year - an economist and a person from the food and nutrition service - to see the impact we're having in Indian Country to further support.

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## 9. Natural Resources Conservation Service Update (EQIP): Jimmy Bramblett

**Jimmy Bramblett:** Growing up in Georgia, didn't encounter a lot of Native American ag. Wisconsin tribal council represents 11 tribes, and he supported it. Trained other states on what the model was like... maybe not the best model. Conservation planning process - try to address needs across the landscape.

The vast majority of their history has been contingent on following this process. One-on-one conversations with land owners.

Only a few private industries have such a successful delivery network.

Work with local people on how to address resource issues. They know best what they work with. Locally lead conservation.

NRCS isn't a production agency - conservation agency.

Based off of request, they can usually address the need. Example: Feral hogs... can't trap them but can do resource inventory and put up observation techniques.

Technical science based planning org - don't have research authorities. Can modify science based practices in certain areas.

Compare where we are today where we should be. Resource concern.

Use a wide range of tools - pictures to science based tools.

Examples of miscommunication: wild rice production. NRCS finds place where the plant can thrive. They find the resource issue.

The planning process is very crucial... can't just jump right in. *Time* is key.

Page 9 - Prioritize based on number of people and size of land that needs assessing. Larger acreages are the western US - takes more acres to do something.

In 2012, there were over 1,000 contracts for a total of \$34.8 million. It's the most that they have ever obligated in dollars. 19,000 applications for CSP this year, and they can only fund about 6,000 of those.

Page 11 - Easement program has ability for NRCS to help pay for the land value for a property that the land may never use - funded about 14 percent last year and will be able to fund about 7 percent this year.

**Sherry Crutcher:** Is there a way to get more money with more demand?

**Jimmy Bramblett:** Doing the best with what they have.

Hoop House— aka seasonal tunnels

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#### 10. USDA Overview of Farm Bill Process: Brad Karmen

**Brad Karmen:** After the president signs a bill, it can take 6-18 months before the payments have been issued. You can't implement all the programs at the same time

**Sherry Crutcher:** She sat on a council about the wording of the LIP program. Used the word "freeze" instead of "blizzard." Denied because of the wording.

**Brad Karmen:** Plenty of opportunity for people to weigh in on what the Secretary can do.

**Sherry Crutcher:** LFP program requires "drought" which is based off of the national drought monitor. The monitor isn't focused on certain areas.

**Brad Karmen:** Varies on where weather stations are. There may be less stations in the west.

**Sherry Crutcher:** What happens in a reservation case?

**Brad Karmen:** Have specific programs that apply to socially disadvantaged or new farmers. Usually have to pay a premium, but it is cut in half. The process has started and the goal is to have some language in the fall - could take a while. Like to hear from interest groups and now is the time to get your voices heard at the beginning of the whole process.

**Mark Wadsworth:** CRP payment. Is it an application or denial?

**Brad Karmen:** If farmer rents land to a beginning farmer at the end of his contract, they get two more years of additional payments.

Since timing isn't good, there probably won't be a big book of proposals. Write to the Secretary to get an answer. That's the best way of getting an answer.

**Sarah Vogel:** If USDA says they oppose it, then it would kill it. Feed the tweaks of the program back into the system.

**Jerry McPeak:** Making your deal ahead of time is much more likely to get a change out of it.

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## **11. USDA's Engagement with 1994 Land Grant Institutions: Lawrence Shorty (via phone)**

**Lawrence Shorty:** Last met at end of June. Met with Tribal Colleges in May 2017.

We do have a 3<sup>rd</sup> party collaborator to recruit students from tribal colleges and universities.

The Department has never had a focus on students and internships at tribal colleges.  
Recruitment of Alaska Native students ...

The reason, we have a MOA with tribal colleges, most recently reiterated in 2014 Farm Bill.  
Renewing that with tribal colleges and will have before end of FY.

**Jerry McPeak:** We have our own tribal college and I don't understand – are the tribal colleges getting funding? How are we hooked up with the land grant schools?

**Lawrence Shorty:** Tied to 1994 schools, established them as land grants.

**Jerry McPeak:** But not every tribal college is.

**Lawrence Shorty:** Must first be accredited, and then go through process of being legislated into a land grant status.

**Jerry McPeak:** The internships...3<sup>rd</sup> party, private internships?

**Mark Wadsworth:** 3<sup>rd</sup> party vendor...

**Lawrence Shorty:** The Department participates in the Federal government Pathways program. Students apply for employment with USDA. The 3<sup>rd</sup> party facilitates the hiring of students - more streamlined. Like with American University. In calendar year 2016, American University informed us that they were putting internships on hold, so we needed a different vendor to recruit Native American and land grant students.

**Jerry McPeak:** Jimmy and Jim: Pathways program...without Indian or veteran preference- can't get hired, right?

**Jimmy Bramblett:** We had Step, SKEP, etc., students could get a foothold of employment in government. Challenge is finding students in Indian Country willing to take the appropriate/required soil classes, working with the 1994 schools to be sure they offer both sets of courses to be a feeder school for both programs. Now it's all combined called Pathways.

**Jerry McPeak:** The veteran preference thing kept us out.

**Jim Radintz:** From FSA's perspective, we have had more success, a more general ag or ag/econ or agri-finance background is ok. Just the nature of the people interested in employment with us. The Pathways hasn't been as impacted by veteran's preference.

**Jimmy Bramblett:** Pathways is generally for students.

**Jerry McPeak:** We need to be concerned with the kid in the middle. The kid who's really bright will make it. The kids who have trouble, we do the best we can to help. The kid in the middle - awfully good kids - who know how to work hard, and they'll make it...but we tend to select those higher performing kids.

**Mark Wadsworth:** Question for OTR and recommendation the Council put forward to incorporate 1994 program into OTR... Update on funding? [Recommendation 24 – marked as completed.]

**Linda Cronin:** No decisions on how the organizational structure would be. Not sure how that will pan out.

**Lawrence Shorty:** Nothing to add.

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## 12. MAZON – A Jewish Response to Hunger: Lisa O'Brien

**Lisa O'Brien:** Janie and her team connected us to USDA and the Office of Tribal Relations. We're based in LA and have 20 people and 3 in DC doing our public policy work. Office in Jerusalem. Work in Israel burgeoning. Mission: End hunger in US and Israel. MAZON is based on Jewish ideal and values: social justice. MAZON is Hebrew. It means: food or sustenance. In 1985, we were founded against the backdrop of the Ethiopian famine. Mission: advocate for public policies to end hunger, primarily in the US, and new work in Israel. What that means: talking to each other, building partnerships. We're very narrow, specific. The only Jewish social justice group focusing exclusively on hunger.

Our work in Indian Country in recent years... We focus on gaps/underrepresented groups who could benefit from advocacy, i.e. Military hunger, among seniors 50-60+, and in rural and remote communities. We work with a group located on Hopi/Navajo nation, and they connected us to Janie Hipp. An unbelievable partner, First Nations Development, IAC, National Congress of American Indians in DC. We are a non-Native ally and supporter in DC, where we have strong relationships there spanning administrations.

The reason we're in Fayetteville, our project called 'This is Hunger,' a mobile exhibit on a big rig truck. Primarily hosted by synagogues across the country.

**Erin Parker:** So grateful for the investment that you've made in Indian Country, and maybe you can go over the work you've been doing in Indian Country.

**Lisa O'Brien:** First project MAZON supported: Shakopee Seeds of Hope. Honored to be invited in as a non-native supporter of that initiative. To support IFAI's code project. The absolutely fundamental importance of what IFAI is doing.

I believe what the code project is going to do for Indian Country ...it's going to lead to food sovereignty. In an ideal world, tribes should decide if they want to have their own Federal nutrition programs. How they're served should be up to that nation. This is so much broader. Our little piece is the food security...no member of a community should go hungry. For MAZON it's completely unacceptable.

Our newer project: First Nations Development project with Crystal Echohawk. The idea of re-messaging who tribes are today and in Indian County. And political and public policy that fits with MAZON's mission. Exciting for us to be a part of the movement that exists around food and agriculture in Indian Country. The moment is now. We will remain an ally. We have a history of supporting partners for the long haul. We're small, but as a funder and partner, our reputation is staying the course because these things do not happen overnight.

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### 13. CNAFR Working Session, continued

**Linda Cronin:** Continue now with agenda item 6, Council goals.

When we describe or talk about our office, we talk about the component of the Council for Native American Farming and Ranching. We work with the Agencies tied to that. We have it on the website, but will continue that so that new leadership has an awareness of the Council and their work.

**Jerry McPeak:** The opportunity for current people in USDA to educate (Abby, Linda, Josiah) you've done a better job. Also this thing has evolved. We've taken more control of our own destiny. Continue to give them time to think about what they've heard. That's where we've gained the most ground...hear what they're doing and ask questions and get a candid answer.

I'd encourage you to do what you've done here, maybe more of it. That time is so important – to talk with each other about what you heard here. Continue that. Really important.

**Sarah Vogel:** Committees: when they're meeting and working between meetings is when we get more done.

Should we have a Farm Bill subcommittee over the next few months? Perhaps we could do telephonic recommendations, add points, and provide support to the Secretary to support these recommendations.

**Angela Peter:** Setting foundations to effectively move forward, yes. Some of the committees were set in stone, like Credit. Others were put together, Education/Youth. That might have been why it took longer to evolve.

**Sherry Crutcher:** Suggestion on Farm Bill portion: read the book that Janie and Zach discussed. Then get a conference call together so we can discuss if we need to add, support, or what. They've taken a lot of time here, and we need to know what we're talking about. Suggestion to our committee: go home, read it over the next few days and get a conference call to go a step further, instead of waiting a month. This is the most important thing we need to do right now.

**Jerry McPeak:** That's a life's worth of work in there. How many of your tribes have a full time lobbyist in DC? (Several do). We do, and that is a very efficient way to get it across. If you have someone who has some clue about the Farm Bill, communicate with those people in your tribe. There may be concepts that your tribe has that aren't congruent with the ideas in here. So just be careful.

**Sherry Crutcher:** Isn't it a week?

**Sarah Vogel:** I'm all for a short deadline. My plan is to make sure I take it to the two big agri tribes in North Dakota to make sure they have it. The main thing is we need to get a lot of these provisions in place. I like idea of a conference call in the near future. You have to read it before you can talk it through with anyone. Gaining awareness of this is the first step.

**Angela Peter:** I agree. Getting it out to our people is the most important. I can get it out to 229 tribes, but will they read it? So I have to follow up to be sure. Bringing a delegation to the IAC to have people working together. In December.

**Sarah Vogel:** By December 9, the Farm Bill should be put to bed by then.

**Sherry Crutcher:** But we have to read it in order to work together, discuss it. As an advisory committee.

**Sarah Vogel:** Maybe we don't have to support it...but we can share it, distribute it. Maybe that's our commitment.

**Jerry McPeak:** I agree. In reality, be prepared to operate with less than with more. Less than what you were. That's the mentality up there. Set a date, Sherry.

**Abby Cruz:** Let's figure it out now. August 4<sup>th</sup>? 4 p.m. ET on Monday, July 31<sup>st</sup>?

**Mark Wadsworth:** Send the announcement out.

**Abby Cruz:** I will invite all the Council members, including the USDA representatives. On second thought, can the committee have an at-large meeting? I will do some research and let everyone know.

**Josiah Griffin:** Subcommittees can meet off the record, but we'll look into this internally and report back. Any meeting that is off the record, the Council cannot consider any official recommendations; otherwise, we would have to do a Federal Register's notice.

**Mark Wadsworth:** Goals, continued.

**Jerry McPeak:** *Long-range* goals, not just short term. To maintain the continuity of the group itself.

**Abby Cruz:** Regarding having an at-large meeting to discuss the Farm Bill... I consulted with our FACA point-of-contact at USDA and if it's a meeting of everybody, it does trigger FACA, and we'd have to do a Federal Register notice, etc. We can consult with General Counsel. [Update post meeting: Abby is creating a Farm Bill subcommittee.]

**Mark Wadsworth:** Is having the Secretary support the 4H a goal of having the Secretary support education...

**Sarah Vogel:** Having Native Americans in programs proportionate to all other groups.

**Angela Peter:** To have all states in tribal conservationists, people who know their own land. I need regional conservationist that are native to our own land.

We have five different people groups in different areas and climates. We are trying to develop people who know the land, say 'this is our issue,' and bring the appropriate programs.

**Mark Wadsworth:** In Montana, as part of your state constitution, isn't there a requirement of a class about the history of Native Americans in Montana, so there has to be Indian education there. It's a law.

**Angela Peter:** It's a law in Alaska too.

**Sherry Crutcher:** Farm Service has regions divided into LAAs, county committee, the regions are specific to the areas. They should have one for Alaska, already divided into

regions, spokespersons who are familiar and sit on the FSA county committee boards. Should already be set up in LAAs.

**Angela Peter:** We're 50 years behind. I will look into it, and if that is the case, we don't know who they are.

**Linda Cronin:** Local Administrative Area, districts established, each has seat on county committee.

I'll be happy to get that info to you, Angela.

**Mark Wadsworth:** Ok, we'll table that, Angela, since you and Josiah will be talking about it.

**Gilbert Louis:** Motion to adjourn CNAFR meeting.

**Shannon McDaniel:** Second.

**Mark Wadsworth:** Vote: motion carries. Meeting ends at about 4:30.