



United States
Department of
Agriculture

United States Department of Agriculture
Council for Native American Farmers and Ranchers
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I. Call to Order and Roll Call

Leslie Wheelock: Thank you. Good morning everyone. This is Leslie Wheelock. One of the additional things that we need to do is try to remember to say our names when we're speaking so that the transcripts are easier to write. This is all being recorded, as Josiah mentioned. With that, I will call this meeting to order. It is according to my little clock here 10:05. Today is Thursday, December the 8th. We're at the El Dorado Room in Las Vegas, Nevada.

I'm going to go through a roll call. Just headline, we have run these meetings with leadership up here that is not from our office, but is leadership from the council members. We will continue that. However, I wanted to give the council members an opportunity to meet each other and to talk to each other and to learn a little bit about each other before rolling into essentially a self-nomination election of a council chairman. I'll call it a chairman, chair. We also typically have a vice-chair. So I want to just to keep that in mind.

Mr. Mark Wadsworth has been our chair for the last two councils and has done a terrific job. I'm trying to follow his

model and somebody will correct me if I screw up, I'm sure - Jerry. So for now I'm going to go through the roll call and please let us know if you're here. Angela Peter.

Angela Peter: Here.

Leslie Wheelock: Angela's here. Erin Parker.

Erin Parker: Here.

Leslie Wheelock: Erin Parker is here. Gilbert Louis III.

Gilbert Louis: Present.

Leslie Wheelock: Gilbert Louis III is here. Jerry McPeak.

Jerry McPeak: Here.

Leslie Wheelock: Jerry McPeak is here. Mark Wadsworth.

Mark Wadsworth: Here.

Leslie Wheelock: Mark Wadsworth is here. Roselynn Yazzie.

Roselynn Yazzie: Here.

Leslie Wheelock: Roselynn is here. Sherry Crutcher.

Sherry Crutcher: Here.

Leslie Wheelock: Sherry is here. Sarah Vogel?

Sarah Vogel: Here.

Leslie Wheelock: Sarah Vogel is here. Tawney Brunsch.

Tawney Brunsch: Here.

Leslie Wheelock: Tawney Brunsch is here. Shannon McDaniel? Shannon McDaniel is absent. Maggie Goode or is it Goodie?

Jerry McPeak: Goode.

Leslie Wheelock: She's not here. It's Goode. Maggie is absent. She could not get away from prior obligations. Mark Rose on behalf of NRCS, Mark Ross is absent. Carl-Martin Ruiz on behalf of Civil Rights?

Carl-Martin Ruiz: Here.

Leslie Wheelock: Carl-Martin Ruiz is here. Connie Holman on behalf of FSA?

Connie Holman: Here.

Leslie Wheelock: Connie Holman is here. Leslie Wheelock, myself, present. With that, we have a quorum. I'm calling this meeting to order. Mr. McPeak, would you please give us the blessing.

II. Blessing

Jerry McPeak: All stand as you're able, please. Heavenly Father, thank you for the folks that gather here to do the work that needs to be done. We ask you to bless us, to be with us, to lead us, to guide us, to think and say we do. Be with those who are less fortunate. Be with those who need to be taken care of. Help us to recognize everyday what you've given us to take care of - the earth, the wind, the soil. Bless and strengthen us each day. Give us the physical strength and mental ability we need to service you, and give us some understanding. Amen.

Male/Female Voices: Amen.

Leslie Wheelock: Thank you, Jerry. I would like to make known for the record that Deputy Secretary Michael Scuse was here earlier with us prior to the beginning of this meeting. He welcomed our newly appointed council members and encouraged us to get to work. With that, we will get to work.

III. Introduction and Welcome to Council Members

I think that we've been through an introduction already. I think we know who's here. I encourage you to continue introducing yourself to each other and sharing conversations. We will have a lunch break later in the day. I'll do that for the housekeeping. There are a lot of places to eat around here. If you have not been here before, we've got some places to recommend. Mr. Wadsworth.

Mark Wadsworth: We have few people that aren't here.

Leslie Wheelock: Yes.

Mark Wadsworth: Can you give us a little overview of the people who aren't here?

Leslie Wheelock: Shannon and Maggie. Do you want to tell as about Shannon and Maggie?

Josiah Griffin: Thank you. For the record, before the meeting started each newly appointed council member did a round of introductions, as well as a brief bio about themselves. Because there are two members, two representatives of Native American farmers and ranchers who are not currently present,

they asked us to read out the bio for those two individuals. That bio is currently listed on Tab 2.

Shannon McDaniel serves as the executive director of Agriculture for the Choctaw Nation. The tribe operates 35,000 acres of grazing lands, 26 head of cattle, 90 buffalo, hay production, the pecan production, and 1,000 acres of high-fenced area providing world class white-tailed bucks. Shannon is also an individual rancher operating a cow-calf operation for most of his life. Shannon will be serving his first term on the council. Shannon was expected to be here.

For Maggie Goode, we have currently listed for the bio. We can provide additional and -- yes, sir?

Jerry McPeak: Do we not know why Shannon is not here?

Leslie Wheelock: Sedelta has asked him. He is here in Las Vegas. He is apparently taking care of some matters and will be joining us shortly. He has emailed us. He is aware that we are meeting.

Jerry McPeak: Thank you.

Josiah Griffin: Then, for point of order I just ask, that whenever anyone begins their part of dialogue, that they speak into the microphone so that everything is captured for recording.

For Maggie Goode, as I mentioned earlier, we can provide additional information on that bio. We currently have listed

that Maggie is from the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of Nevada. She will not be present at this meeting, but is joining the council for her first term as well. Yes, sir?

Mark Wadsworth: Correction. That's out of Montana. Not Nevada.

Josiah Griffin: Okay. Maggie - this information is based on the home address that was provided.

Leslie Wheelock: [Indiscernible].

Josiah Griffin: Oh. It is?

Leslie Wheelock: Yeah.

Josiah Griffin: Then I apologize. Thank you, sir.

Mark Wadsworth: For the record, I was a prior member of the same [indiscernible].

Leslie Wheelock: You need to talk in the microphone. All right. Yes, sir. Thank you for reminding us. Please feel free to remind us when necessary. The next item on our agenda is a review of the meeting materials by Josiah.

IV. Review of Meeting Materials

Josiah Griffin: Thank you. So we have a fairly robust agenda for these next two days. A good chunk of this meeting will be to reacquaint and to acquaint, as the case may be, our members to the work of the council so that we are continuing to build off of this legacy. Now, with that in mind, if you will

take a look at the first page, so a tab is divided out based on the presentation or when that agenda item is for each day.

In Tab 2 we have the council member bios and contact list. Tab 3, we have the Council for Native American Farming and Ranching bylaws and charter. Tab 4, we will be adding a recommendation matrix, as well as a list of all of the previous letters that the council has made to the secretary and the Secretary of Agriculture's responses to those letters. Tab 5, we have a USDA overview. Tab 6 is the FFA overview. Tab 7 is the Office of Tribal Relations update.

Tab 8, we will have a member of the federally-recognized tribal extension program join us to discuss the economic impact in Arizona. Tab 9 is the 2017 Census of Agriculture update. Tab 10 is the Farm Service Agency Land Tenure update, with 11 being the General Farm Service Agency update. Tab 12 is the Natural Resources Conservation Service update. And 13 is the Intertribal Agriculture Council update. Yes, ma'am.

Erin Parker: This is Erin. I just have a question about Tab 2. Is there supposed to be contact information in there? My binder only has bios.

Josiah Griffin: We will also be sending out the contact list. Thank you for catching that.

Erin Parker: Thank you.

Josiah Griffin: Yes, Angela?

Angela Peter: Yes. I have nothing on Tab 4.

Josiah Griffin: Yes, ma'am. So Tab 4, I will be passing out in just a second.

Angela Peter: Oh. Okay.

Tawney Brunsch: Josiah.

Josiah Griffin: Yes, Tawney.

Tawney Brunsch: This is Tawney. Angela and I are both missing the charter under Tab 2, and I'm wondering where the minutes are, the minutes from the last meeting.

Josiah Griffin: The minutes from the last meeting have not been added to the binder at this time. I apologize for that oversight. But for anyone who is interested, transcripts are available online at our website at usda.gov/otr. I understand that the transcripts are typically a much lengthier version of the meeting because they are verbatim, word for word. We will be working to provide a copy of minutes from both the last meeting and this meeting once the transcripts are made available for this meeting.

Tawney Brunsch: Josiah, this is Tawney again. I just want to reiterate that I think it was at the last meeting in July that we requested that the minutes always be included in the meeting materials obviously. But also if we could have the electronic version of these materials I'd say at least ten days

in advance, ten days to a week in advance so that the council has time to review them prior to the meeting.

Josiah Griffin: Yes. Thank you, Tawney. I can certainly understand and appreciate the request for the council to have additional time or adequate time, excuse me, to review these documents. As with a few of the previous meetings, we have been undergoing a little bit of a transition for the council. We appreciate you bearing with us as we continue to move forward with onboarding a new designated federal officer to help make sure that the workflow is maintained.

Tawney Brunsch: Thank you.

Josiah Griffin: Yes, Sarah.

Sarah Vogel: Two points. Number one, I think Mr. Rose who's a new member from the NRCS, which is a new feature in this council, because before there were two from the FSA side. Now it's Mr. Radintz. But as I left the IAC meeting, I think Mr. Rose was going up to speak about NRCS to the large group down the hall. So I am assuming that took priority and he'll be here momentarily.

The second thing is, and I want to echo what Tawney said about minutes, I think the bylaw specify that the minutes shall be prepared and sent out within an X period of time after every meeting. Minutes are not the same as the transcript. I mean none of us have the energy, I think, to read two days of

verbatim transcript of a meeting. We don't have the time rather. We may have the energy, but we have other things to do, too. So what I would like to do is see if there could be somebody who could be - there's a new word I learned recently, voluntold - voluntold to keep minutes. I nominate Sedelta. Because if somebody would just sit here and say a motion was made, there was discussion, there were introductions and then it could be maybe four or five pages and we could have it quickly and not wait for the transcript and the corrections of the transcript. So I'd like to make that as a motion.

Josiah Griffin: So we have a motion on the floor.

Erin Shirl: I'll second that.

Josiah Griffin: We have a second from Erin Shirl. Do we have any further discussion on this motion? Yes, sir.

Jerry McPeak: Could you repeat the motion ma'am, just a short version.

Sarah Vogel: The motion is that Sedelta keep minutes for the purposes of this meeting and send them out to us shortly after the meeting occurs.

Josiah Griffin: So we had a motion, and then we had a second. Do we have any further discussion on this motion? Who do we have that is in favor of this motion? And opposed? So for point of record, the ayes have it and this motion has been passed.

Sherry Crutcher: Josiah. This is Sherry Crutcher. Could I make a correction to my bio?

Josiah Griffin: Certainly, ma'am.

Sherry Crutcher: That's family business, that's not just myself. I don't want to take credit for my father, my brother, my sister. We all. I wouldn't want them to be left out if somebody read that and said Sherry is taking all the credit. No. No. [Cross-talking] So it's a family business that includes my dad, my brother, and my sister.

Josiah Griffin: Thank you, Sherry. So that will be amended for the bio.

Sherry Crutcher: Thank you.

Josiah Griffin: Moving forward, if we have no further discussion on Item 4, the Review of Meeting Materials, I would like to turn this over to Leslie Wheelock to provide a USDA overview.

V. USDA Overview

Leslie Wheelock: Thank you, Josiah. Under Tab 5, you'll find a PowerPoint presentation. One of the reasons that this is not being done as PowerPoint is because that would require to pay more money and we try to watch our expenses. But the other is that the material in this, the typeface is so tiny in order to get so much in there that it makes it a better handout than a PowerPoint presentation. That's why you have it in this format.

If you put it in front of you and take it out -- oh, yeah, yeah, I guess it will fit in the binder.

If you put it in front of you and flip the first page over, you've got USDA agencies, obviously in the wrong order because I put "continued" on the wrong page. So you've got the USDA agencies. USDA has 17 agencies divided into mission areas, and what you have in front of you is a very brief description of what each of those agencies does. I apologize for our council team members who have been with us before because we've been through all this. What we're trying to do is to keep the amount of talking at you reduced so that you have time to talk more with each other. I'm not going to go through and read this. This is material for homework and for you to refer to when you're thinking about what are they talking about, which organization is that, what else does that organization do? So this is put together as kind of a reference guide.

If you flip the page, you'll see the USDA organization chart. We didn't have an organization chart until a few months ago for USDA, and we didn't have one that showed the Office of Tribal Relations where it belongs. So we were delighted that they put this together partly because we kept pestering them, or Josiah kept pestering them, and partly because it helps to get a better idea of the size of the department when you can see all

of these different offices, agencies, and functions underneath the secretary.

You can also see what we call mission area. So if I skip down to the bottom row across the bottom blue line that goes across, you'll see a mission area that says Undersecretary for Natural Resources and Environment. In USDA, that acronym is NRE. The undersecretary, by the way, is senate-confirmed. Under that senate-confirmed undersecretary, you have both Forest Service and Natural Resources Conservation Service, two large and very important agencies in the work of the department and in a lot of the work of this council.

I'll let you go read across. You can see each of those undersecretaries is senate-confirmed. Each of those undersecretaries has a number of agencies under their mission area. Our USDA folks, if you have additional things that you want to add into this, please feel free to jump in and join me or help me out.

Below that is this chart that says USDA Agriculture and Food Sovereignty. This is one of our office's, the Office of Travel Relations, attempts to try to put some of the programs that are operated by these offices into more convenient buckets so that tribal members and tribes have a better idea of what we do and where to find it. So you can see they're color coded by agency. The agency key is in the little box in the lower right-

hand corner. The bright yellow items are things that you look for on the Web. There's a lot of material under each of those items that pops up when you put that search into your Google search or whatever search engine you use.

That's a finding tool. This is also one of the areas that we're using to put together to complete the tribal guide to USDA, which is currently in review. We've got a publication that we've been working on for a few months. People have asked us why it has taken so long to get it together. We had to wait for the 2014 Farm Bill to get rolled out, so it takes a little bit of time to do that.

If you turn that over, the first very large agency that I am looking at is Rural Development Program areas. Rural Development is one of our largest financial organizations within USDA and has over the past eight years contributed over \$3 billion to Indian Country in way of primarily loan financing but also grants. So you see that Rural Development is divided up into Rural Utility Service, Rural Housing and Community Facilities, and Rural Business and Cooperative Service.

Then the next page shows you - golly, that's hard to read - all of the Rural Housing and Community Facilities programs. If you flip the page, you've got Rural Business and Cooperative programs continued on the next page, then Rural Utilities

programs. These pages don't have numbers, I apologize, or the numbers are too small for me to read.

You also have this graph. It's a shorthand attempt to show you what organizations are eligible for those different programs that are listed on the three prior pages. Not what organizations, what they fund. So you've got that shorthand in front of you for Rural Development.

Josiah Griffin: We have a question from Erin.

Leslie Wheelock: Thank you.

Erin Parker: I'm sorry to interrupt you, Leslie.

Leslie Wheelock: That's okay.

Erin Parker: This is Erin. I just have a question. This is Slide 8 if you're looking at it on the electronic format, which is where I made all my notes. So I'm sorry, I have my laptop open. The value added producer grant, under applicant it lists only independent producers, farmer rancher cooperatives, et cetera, et cetera. I know tribes are also eligible under it, so apply for that now. I know that was a change that was made a couple of years ago. I know Rural Development worked really hard to get that change made. So I don't know if there's an ability to amend that document or not, but I just wanted to point out it.

Leslie Wheelock: Yeah. It's a 2015 document.

Erin Parker: Right.

Leslie Wheelock: And they're hard to find, so we're continuing to use it. Thank you for the note. We will make sure that that change has been made.

Erin Parker: Thank you.

Leslie Wheelock: So I'm going to flip over to your guide to FSA Farm Loans which you'll see. Hi, Jerry. Jerry, do you want to comment or question?

Jerry McPeak: I have none.

Leslie Wheelock: Okay. There's a very brief farm loan programs information chart telling you about a type of loan, the maximum loan amounts, and the rates and terms. I don't think any of these have changed, Connie, but you can tell me. I think I got everything in there. Below that, Natural Resources Conservation Service and a really shorthand of the programs that they offer, most of you have worked with NRCS and you have some knowledge of some of these programs. Yes, Sarah Vogel?

Sarah Vogel: I have a question in just glancing at this really quickly because we just got it. There's nothing here about the Fractionated Loan Program. I don't see it.

Leslie Wheelock: That's right. That's right. Because it's been rolled out so recently that we don't have that material in there yet.

Sarah Vogel: But, again, I would make a motion to amend that because I think that's a really key program people have

been waiting for a long time. Also the micro-loan program I think needs to be raised up because that's been so huge. Kudos to FSA for getting a micro-loan land loan and a micro-loan operating loan, because I think that's been very widely accepted. I think it came out of feedback in part from earlier iterations of this council.

Leslie Wheelock: Yes. Thank you, Sarah. Sherry.

Sherry Crutcher: Sherry Crutcher. We also need to add the storage loans. They now came up with storage loans with that to help preserve your hay, or your crops, or your potatoes. That's another low interest loan that's been added to that.

Leslie Wheelock: Very good point. Thank you very much. It's also being used for wild rice up in Minnesota.

Sherry Crutcher: Right. Yeah.

Leslie Wheelock: Anyone else? I'm going through this quickly because we could take a whole lot of time to do this. Other financial vehicles, so there you have the quick micro-loans, the youth loans, technical assistance, business planning and so forth. This slide is one that I use for our tribal leadership. Basically, telling them not to spend their money without spending USDA's. I do a lot of presentations. This office has a lot of presentations, especially the rural development financing and NRCS financing is tribally-focused and can be used for a lot of their infrastructure rather than them

using their trust funds or them using casino revenue. They can use that money for something else.

Contact information, here you have my name and Sedelta's name. Our names will be disappearing effective January 20th at noon of 2017, and you will have Abby Kardel Cruz [phonetic] and Josiah in our office. And there's our contact information.

Yes, ma'am. Sherry Crutcher.

Sherry Crutcher: How do you pronounce your last name, Sedelta?

Sedelta Oosahwee: Oosahwee.

Sherry Crutcher: Oosahwee. Thank you.

Sarah Vogel: I have a question.

Leslie Wheelock: Yes, Sarah.

Sarah Vogel: Is there any way during this meeting to loop in or have Skype, or FaceTime, or something? It's just very awkward that we're meeting today and tomorrow and she's joining us. I mean she's going to be taking over on Monday. I realize there'll be a transition for a few weeks with you guys and Josiah for a longer term, but was there any consideration made in getting her here even if she were on vacation? This is Las Vegas after all.

Leslie Wheelock: This is Leslie. We did in a couple of instances actually tried to work with HR and tried to work with Abby to get her here, including offering to pay her

transportations, talk to her management. She has a stack of work that she is trying to complete at EPA and has taken the shortest amount of possible time to do it and to get over to our office since she was offered the job and has cleared all of the hurdles that HR requires. We do apologize that she's not here.

She will be moving very quickly to get up to speed. We think she's highly capable of doing that. I do apologize. We put out the hiring in order to get her here. As you know, Amanda Burley had been in this position and has gone off to graduate school, so we had to put another callout. So, apologies that she's not here. I think that you will enjoy her and I think she'll do a good in this. But you're right, having been here, it would have been useful.

Sarah Vogel: But it's helpful having the explanation. Otherwise, it was just a big question mark.

Leslie Wheelock: Where is she, yeah.

Josiah Griffin: For a point of information, there are subcommittees for this council which we'll get into a little bit later in the day. So this is not the only place where we are able to convene and have dialogue. I expect that Abby will be attending most if not all of those subcommittee meetings.

Leslie Wheelock: I'm going to see if I can blow through the Office of Tribal Relations so that we can actually get FSA's presentations in. The Office of Tribal Relations, which is the

office under which this council is managed, as I said before, was made permanent by the 2014 Farm Bill. The director of the office is an officer of the department, and we have a budget of approximately \$500,000. It's plus two or four depending on the year. That budget has bounced around a lot prior to my arrival in 2013. I think it was at that level for 2012 and 2013. It hasn't changed.

In fiscal year 2017, the president's budget request asked for an additional 50 percent, so an additional \$250,000, so that we could have additional staff in the office because right now the \$500,000 covers the director. Let me go by name. It covers the director. It covers one person at a John Laurie/Abby Cruz level, and it might cover an admin or additional travel.

In addition to that budget, we manage a cooperative agreement with the Intertribal Ag Council for the Indian Technical Assistance Network or ITAN which works in place of Tribal Extension in a few places. Not enough but a few places. The administrative fees from that budget cover both Josiah's salary, as well as another person if we can get them in. Well, we'll get another person in. We can hire two people under that agreement. That's part of the agreement, two full-time employees. Because that cooperative agreement is an agreement and we're not sure that we're going to continue to be able to have the funding for it, those positions tend to be of the

fellowship kind of position or term positions because we can't guarantee that that funding will be there. Yes, Jerry.

Jerry McPeak: This is Jerry McPeak. For you folks who are new, the people who are in charge or whose job it is to help run this thing have done an excellent job of getting cooperation outside their own group to help fund what we do. I remember them manipulating or managing a situation or we wouldn't be able to hold the meetings and to do the things that we do. So they've done a really good job of scrounging, that's the long and short of it.

So for you folks who are new, they've had to find ways to fund what we're doing. Even though it says we're going to meet twice and all those kinds of things, there weren't the funds really do that. But on the legal background we had, there wasn't anything. They've done a good job of scrounging, the staff.

Leslie Wheelock: Thank you, Jerry.

Jerry McPeak: Three words. It really works.

Leslie Wheelock: The office does send out letters and essentially walk around the department asking each of those undersecretaries that you saw in that org chart to help fund the travel of this council, as well as the work, the paper stuff, everything that's done in these meetings, the meetings themselves, the meeting rooms. Vegas is the most expensive

place, I think, that we meet. Although, travel to go to some of the places we've been going has been pretty interesting. So I think that with support from organizations like FSA, support from Office of Civil Rights in terms of helping with the financing of this council has been very much appreciated. I just want to put it there. Yes, sir, yes, Mark Wadsworth.

Mark Wadsworth: Mark Wadsworth here. So this is the first time I've really realized that Josiah and your positions are actually part of that cooperative agreement through the Technical Assistance Network.

Leslie Wheelock: It's not my position. It's Josiah's, plus one.

Mark Wadsworth: Yeah. Okay. This cooperative agreement that Josiah is operating on is an annualized funded situation in which you go to the secretary to ask for this funding?

Leslie Wheelock: I'll explain that, the cooperative agreement, so back up one step. The Indian Tribal Assistance Network was one of the requirements of the Keepseagle Settlement. That requirement has expired, but we are continuing to support the cooperative arrangement. That agreement is funded through a collection of funds from around the department every year. It's annual. We have worked very hard this year to try to figure out a way to make it a longer term financed vehicle. But because of the way that it's funded, we can only

extend that year-to-year. We cannot fund it in advance for more than a year. Yes, Erin.

Erin Parker: This is Erin. I just have a question about the budget. Is it possible to do a one-year agreement that's obligated for one year but expended over a period of five years per the Federal Budget Process?

Leslie Wheelock: We can't obligate beyond the one year.

Erin Parker: Right, you can obligate for annual money. But you could expend over five years? Like the difference between an obligation and an outlay, that's the five-year rule.

Josiah Griffin: I can explain this a little bit.

Leslie Wheelock: Okay. Go ahead.

Josiah Griffin: This is Josiah. Our budget is based on annual appropriations to each of these different agencies. So for each of these funds, they have a term limit. So most of the funds that we pull from are what we call one-year funds, which means that at least based on what we've been talking to our chief financial officer about, they're limited to the fiscal year. So there are some agencies, including the Forest Service, that have been kind enough to provide multiyear funds which we have then be able to use and carry over from one fiscal year to the next.

Leslie Wheelock: You're confusing two things. So that's funding for the council. Funding for the IAC contract where

legally we can obligate and extend it, but financially we cannot. So we've got the Anti-deficiency Act problems that we run into if we try to obligate for more than a year or extend for more than a year.

Mark Wadsworth: Leslie, I guess what I'm trying to get to here is that I think that we need that continuity for the benefit of our whole tribal system that we're talking about and working with USDA. My concern is to see what we can do as a council to possibly put some more continuity and some surety to your budget concerns. I would venture to say, I guess if we could present a motion. To increase your budget by 50 percent to the \$750,000, I'd more than like to make that motion.

But also, too, in line with that, Leslie, I think that what we've experienced here in the council in the last four years is that we'll have a DFO basically every 9 to 15 months. That's kind of like we've been through a series of this, and Abigail will be a part of that new change, too, coming through the door. So I guess what I would like to see, too, is that -- I realize that you are in an appointed position and I don't know what your personal aspirations are after January 20th, but I would sure like to, as a council, if we can make a motion to keep you as appointee, a recommendation from us for that, I'd be more than happy to entertain that. But, again, that would be your own personal endeavor I guess.

Leslie Wheelock: Thank you. I appreciate the vote of confidence. We don't have any control over that, although there is a potential for tribes to make recommendations for the position. Tribes should be making recommendations of personnel for the position. Now would be a good time to do that.

The recommendation for additional funding in the future would be appreciated. It was done this year because we managed to push through the need for it and get that at a level where people paid attention to it. That additional request is not showing up in the current funding bills that are being pushed through the House and the Senate, so we don't think we're going to see that budget increase in Fiscal Year '17 if we ever get a budget for Fiscal Year '17 rather than a continuing resolution. But I think that that's helpful.

We do have a recommendation to the secretary on maintaining the Indian Technical Assistance Network. I don't know who named it, but it's really difficult to remember. That Indian Technical Assistance Network recommendation is to continue the network not necessarily with IAC. IAC is not mentioned in the recommendation. But there is a lot of potential for this council to make further recommendations on that cooperative agreement and its funding, and to continue pushing on that request. Sarah.

Sarah Vogel: I'm fairly anxious about the technical assistance arm of the support that USDA provides because those are driven by passionate people with deep knowledge and lots of experience. Their only flaw is that there are too few of them. But it just seems that we need to have a much better structure, a longer term and some assurance of funding. The protection of the Keepseagle Settlement agreement is over, but I think they have more than proven their worth in terms of assistance to people who work on a multitude of things.

I remember when we were doing the claim process. It was very near the end and we were trying to reach people who had some minor problem with the claims that they had turned in. I talked to an elderly couple who I think was on the Navajo reservation. They were snowed in and they didn't speak English. I called Ross or somebody. Somehow this elderly couple was helped. That's just one little illustration and I remember just feeling such waves of relief that we could do that, but we would have never been able to do that without the kind of passionate commitment of the people who are working in the system. So I think as we go forward in the next year or so we got to figure out what to do about it. That's something we got to fix.

Leslie Wheelock: I agree. This is Leslie. When we have that conversation, there are some additional information that I need to share with the council in terms of that agreement and

how we have tried to support the funding for that agreement in our office and what's going on there because I think it's important.

We're kind of running out of time for this part of the agenda. From the Office of Tribal Relations, as you've heard, Sedelta and I are appointees and we'll be leaving in January. We are required as appointees to hand in our resignations. That has been done. They are effective January 20th at noon, which is the day that the new president will be sworn in. We don't know how long it will take to put a director in place in this office. It's one of those things that the more Indian Country helps with it, the more likely it is to happen both in terms of asking that somebody be put in place immediately and in terms of putting forth potential people who are willing and able to perform in the role of the director of the office. We're hoping that someone will find that position soon.

Sedelta was reading this morning that there is a meeting of tribal leadership that's been called by the new administration. That will be held next week in Washington. We'll share that information with you later today. But to the extent that you can get to your tribal leadership and push forth recommendations, push forth potential candidates. Make sure that that voice is heard at that meeting, it will be very important. USDA typically gets overlooked in pretty much

everything, and all of you know very well how important it is within USDA to have tribal representation. So, again, thank you for being here. We will get that information to you to help get the word out. Mr. McPeak?

Jerry McPeak: Did we address these communications?

Leslie Wheelock: That's a good question.

Jerry McPeak: No joke.

Leslie Wheelock: But do you have the information? Well, let us look into that and we'll let you know. We will definitely let you know. Any other questions? Am I out of time? I'm out of time.

VI. Review of Previous Council Recommendations

Leslie Wheelock: So at this point we're going to turn to a review of the previous council recommendations. As people who have been on this council in the prior term may recall, the recommendation list had been edited and rewritten. It was not as representative of the work that had been done as it could have been. Josiah primarily and I through editing have gone back through, tried to put it back into order and tried to include more information, as well as updates. So I'm going to turn this over to Josiah to talk us through it.

Josiah Griffin: Thank you, Leslie. I apologize for the delay in handing this over to everyone. I understand that this is a lot of information to browse through and to do a deeper

dive through, so it has been our hope to allow adequate time in the agenda later on and each day to allow the council more of a conversation and to continue the conversation on these recommendations.

What I had just passed out, you'll find a few different packets of paper. The first is the spreadsheet. It's the recommendation tracker which is updated as of December 2016. The number of the recommendation is when that recommendation has been made in the queue. Going back all the way to the beginning of the council, we have the recommendation, when that recommendation was specifically made, which month and year, which agencies had been assigned, and ongoing notes as a way of keeping track of any progress.

What some new members may have questions about in particular are the subcommittees. It is the authority of the designated federal officer to establish subcommittees. My predecessors have typically done this at the behest of the council, so there have been a number of incarnations as to what those subcommittees are. At this point in time, we have three subcommittees that are active. The first is Credit and Credit Deserts. The second is Land Management which deals with the interagency collaboration of land managing agencies to ensure that there is greater collaboration and to ensure where there is a disparity between resources that we are actively working on

the USDA's behalf to make sure that those are at least addressed if not taken a look at. The third is Sustainability where sustainability has incorporated climate change in youth and education, as well as other environmental concerns.

I know that you all don't want to hear my voice drone on through this list of recommendations, but the additional packets include every recommendation letter made by the council to the Secretary of Agriculture to give you both the recommendation and the rationale for that recommendation. Typically, the format for that is the recommendation for each letter is in bolding and the rationale for that recommendation is in plain text underneath. Then the following letter to each council recommendation is the secretary's response providing initial guidelines and guidance as to what the department will do in consideration of these recommendations.

Sarah Vogel: When can we start talking about that?

Josiah Griffin: I was going to ask is there an interest in having us go down the list? We want to make sure that this is as dynamic a dialogue as possible.

Sarah Vogel: I'd like to start.

Leslie Wheelock: Let me, Sarah, just to jump in here for one second. One of the things that you'll see is a lag in time between the time of the meeting and the time we actually get a response back from the secretary. This work is all done in our

office in conjunction with all of the agencies. So what you typically see in terms of the secretary's letter is a letter that our office has put together in response to all of the recommendations and they all addressed in one letter, which takes some time.

But also our office goes through and collects information from the agencies that have oversight over that issue and puts together a letter that then goes through clearance within the department. That process often takes longer than it really should in order to get the information back out to the council in a timely way. We hope that having additional personnel in our office will help us to make sure that that moves a little bit faster and a little bit smoother. This is not to reduce the recommendations. The longer the list of recommendations, typically the more time it takes just to get everything together. Thank you. Sarah.

Sarah Vogel: Yeah. To oversimplify a very, very complex problem, this council for some time has been struggling to get to the bottom of why it is that so few Native Americans have access to the Forest Service grazing lands. We passed a resolution recommending that basically if tribal lands can satisfy the requirement of the Forest Service, that there would be some type base property which would entitle Native Americans to apply. I'm vastly oversimplifying. But I see we have gotten

to the bottom by this updated December 16th page 5. The language in the Forest Service directives and handbook requires quote ownership, close quote, of the adjacent. I think that means land.

Oh, I see, Forest service does not view trust lands as land then beneficially owned by the tribes. I leave it to you, Carl-Martin, Office of Civil Rights, this strikes me as being 100 percent wrong. If it's just a regulation, it is not the law. If it's just a regulation, changes can be made if there is will and effort to do it. As I've said earlier, I used to work at grazing associations and I would have these Native American ranchers who were paying big bucks for their grazing. Their next door neighbor, who happened to be white, had access to very inexpensive land rented by the Forest Service.

I mean Forest Service is an odd name because they also administer the grasslands of which there are a great many. So I am just surprised. We, as a council, I don't think should stop with those statements that the Forest Service has directives and handbooks. When I sued the USDA the first time in the early 80s I would bring up the law and the people who worked at USDA at that time said so that may be the law, but that's not in our procedures. Then what do you do? You sue. You win. But like it shouldn't be. It shouldn't get to that point. So okay, Carl, take it away.

Josiah Griffin: If I may real fast, not to break the momentum of this conversation, I'd like to recognize the addition of Mark Rose to the council. Mark is acting on behalf of Chief Weller of the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Mark Wadsworth: If I could add to that concern, because both BLM and Forest Service have the same kind of structure to the allotment status, I do not know from the BLM and DOI portion of that whether they have the ownership requirement that USDA has or if they mimic each other.

Leslie Wheelock: This is Leslie. One of the things that we're working on is trying to get both organizations simultaneously working together, but primarily that is making sure that the Interior solicitors and our Office of General Counsel are conferring on how the land is worked at the Interior and how the trust land is managed, if you will, how this process is managed by Interior, and ensure that USDA is lining up with it. We don't have an immediate fix for it. Carl-Martin has told us at the last meeting, I think, that there is a process that includes consultation and includes I guess some research that the Forest Service is I think still committed to doing.

Sarah Vogel: Let me add one more.

Leslie Wheelock: Carl-Martin is shaking his head yes.

Sarah Vogel: As I understand it and I am no authority on Indian Law or sovereignty issues or trust issues and so on, but

say a bank is a trustee for a minor. That trustee is supposed to try to get the best deal possible for the person with whom they are in the trust relationship. And I think this is one of those instances. We shouldn't stop at, you know, we don't recognize it as beneficially owned by the tribes. By the way, this isn't just about tribes. This is about individual allotted trust land as well. So that is an unacceptable status.

Carl-Martin Ruiz: May I say something? This is Carl-Martin Ruiz. Since the last meeting, we have had discussions with Forest Service regarding this concern. We've also had discussions with OJC. I know that pretty much parallel to the work of the council, there has been some items that have been prioritized by the assistant secretary that went up to the secretary's office regarding the definition of what base property means and that this is something that should be addressed. So there have been two basically simultaneous recommendations that have gone up, one from the council and one from our office.

The approach in terms of how we move this forward is going to depend in part -- we're in the process of going through some tremendous change right now. I know this is a concern on the part of the assistant secretary. I know it's a concern on the part of the secretary from what I've heard from my boss. It appears what may end up occurring is that while these had been

items that had been prioritized, what most likely will happen realistically speaking is that's going to be something that's going to be looked at by the next administration that comes in. While that's not the best of news to get right now regarding the council, I just want to be very straightforward. It's not that it's not important. It's extremely important.

Josiah and I were just talking about this yesterday because there are other agencies in USDA that don't really necessarily have this type of requirement in terms of how you define and whether it's something that base property is owned, not owned, or however you want to define it. I think what we need to do next, and this is per what we were talking about yesterday, for us, I'm going to be hanging in here as long as I can. I'm career employ and so is Josiah. Our intention is to make sure that we get individuals that represent some of these other agencies, which are part of the Office of the General Counsel, to perhaps have a meeting with OGC representatives that represent Forest Service to try to come to some kind of consensus as to how this should be interpreted.

But there are a whole bunch of regulatory things that are beyond our control at the Office of Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights for which Forest Service needs to become more proactively involved. I think their intention is to do that,

but realistically I don't see that happening until sometime in the future.

Sarah Vogel: In which case the status is --

Carl Martin Ruiz: I understand.

Sarah Vogel: Sorry. This is Sarah again. The status which is just sort of like in the story, the book, the handbook, the directives don't allow it. I think the status should be what Carl-Martin just said. That is, that this has gone to some other stage because a great deal of work has gone into this. So I make a motion that the status be updated, so we have a record of what Carl-Martin just stated.

Leslie Wheelock: Josiah.

Josiah Griffin: This is Josiah. So the recommendation matrix that you see before you is the Office of Tribal Relations' concerted effort working with all of these partnering agencies to keep a constant track on the progress and success of previous council recommendations. So to the extent that these conversations continue because this conversation happened right after all of the recommendation matrixes were printed out, we will make sure that they're updated for your consideration and deliberation.

Sarah Vogel: Again, this is Sarah. It would appear from Carl-Martin's statement that it says the Forest Service does not give trust land and land beneficially owned by tribes as land

beneficially owned by the tribes. It sounds like the Office of Civil Rights has concerns over that conclusion, as does the assistant secretary. That's what I'm saying it's like this isn't the end of the story.

Leslie Wheelock: This is Leslie. One of the things that we were doing when we were updating this, part of the story is in the notes. I think we've got it. It flipped between the notes and the status on this that once we put this into the notes, we'll just put them back in their proper columns. I think they're just in the wrong columns, and we don't have all of Carl-Martin's information.

Sarah Vogel: Don't get me wrong. I appreciate the work you've done pulling all these stuff together because it's long and complex, things escape. The recommendation or things we started looking at in 2013 and '14 are still happening today. So I appreciate the attempt at pulling it together. And I don't think we had a report - did we - saying that this is what the Forest Service's conclusion was. This was their reason. And I wasn't at the last meeting in person.

Leslie Wheelock: This is Leslie. This was one of the recommendations. As you mentioned, you'll see it through the last three years. This recommendation or some element of it keeps coming up, and there's a reference back to one of these sections because I was trying to consolidate all notes in one

place. There is, currently, a recommendation in the letter to the secretary. We are working on that response to that recommendation. That's what the Office of Civil Rights and Office of General Counsel have been working on. That will be in the secretary's response to the recommendations that came out of the last meeting. So that update will become available as that letter comes out because, we're actually, we're still also working with lots of special trustee on trying to get everybody on the same page.

Sarah Vogel: Well, we got it.

Leslie Wheelock: Yes, we do on a lot of things.

Josiah Griffin: If I may, this is Josiah, that brings up an important point. Between recommendation 29 and 30 you will see a line item that says Provisional: For deliberation. Any recommendation that is after that point was made by the Council for Native American Farming and Ranching in September. We are, along with the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights and other agencies, are working through that response as Leslie mentioned. But to the extent that we have information currently, we wanted to make sure that you know that we are working on it and that progress is still being made.

Sarah Vogel: Can I make a suggestion? We just got this in summer. I mean this leapt out at me, this thing about the handbook and directives. But would it be possible to take like

a short break so we could read this so that we could have a more focused discussion at this point in the agenda? I don't want to just move on without an opportunity to -- I've been on the council for the last four years, but I'm thinking the new people, especially, may really appreciate the opportunity to review this material that's just handed out.

VII. Break

Leslie Wheelock: Sarah, we have a break coming up. We could take a 10-minute. We can do it now and add it to the break that's coming up, which means that we are reconvening at 11:30. It's now 11:10. It's not a lot of time, but it's more time than none and it's an additional ten minutes. Is that satisfactory to everybody?

Mark Wadsworth: Let's do it.

Leslie Wheelock: Thank you. We're going to reconvene at 11:30.

Leslie Wheelock: I'm waiting for my sound. Thank you. We're reconvening at 11:32. I'm figuring out where I am.

Mr. Ben Meyer, would you like to give us a presentation on Future Farmers of America and Establishing Local Clubs? As Mr. Meyer's coming up here, I wanted to let everybody know, especially our prior council members, our prior council members in at least their first session - as I understand it - had a lot of review of what USDA does. As I alluded to, we're going to

try not to talk out here so much so that you all can talk among yourselves - which means that there's a lot of material that you will be handed that we might go through very quickly. If there are questions, feel free to ask them. But there's also a lot of what I'll call homework. Most of you already know our programs. You don't need to be told what our programs are. You don't need to be told a lot of anything except possibly appropriations and what's coming up in the Farm Bill. But feel free to ask questions as Tawney's asking the question.

Tawney Brunsch: Tawney Brunsch. I just want to suggest that possibly I see we've got an hour-and-a-half that's allotted for lunch today. If I could just throw this out there for those of you that would be interested. I feel like these recommendations and the follow-up responses and stuff need a lot more review than we could do in the additional ten minutes. I'm going to see if anyone would be interested in maybe just taking a quick little 30-minute break, gather our lunch, come back to this room and go through this, especially for the newer council members, we can discuss this. We can actually make sure everybody's on the same page with exactly where we're at for the remaining hour. So a kind of a working lunch that we could do probably then from noon to 1:00. I'm just going to throw that out there.

Leslie Wheelock: Okay. Are there questions, comments, concerns?

Sarah Vogel: I like that idea.

Erin Parker: This is Erin. I also like that.

Leslie Wheelock: There are a few places that we can go. There's a food court in the casino. There's a hotdog place out in the alley. Fish & Chips is out in the alley.

Jerry McPeak: The hotdog, that's my kind of idea.

Leslie Wheelock: They're really good. They're really good. They're super good. They're not cheap.

Jerry McPeak: I would say that.

Leslie Wheelock: They're fancy, but they're really good. That's what we've been eating for the last two years. So I think we've got a consensus here that we will do that. What we're going to do is take a half-an-hour break from noon until 12:30, and have everybody try to get back here as fast as they can by 12:30. All right. Without further delay, unless Jerry -
- Jerry, did you want to say something?

Jerry McPeak: Yes, ma'am. I'm not sure that this is the appropriate time. This is Jerry McPeak. But I'm sure this is the appropriate statement. As I stated earlier, for you new folks, if you can say it in three words, don't use 30 words. That's my method. We spent two years of not accomplishing a lot, of looking at it meticulously. If someone is telling you

about each one of the agencies and what they did and who did what and what was going on, I think what you're each going to find is there's going to be certain portions of this that interest you and there will be other portions that won't interest you very much. They're not very applicable to your area, to what you're doing.

It's unfortunate in some ways, but you are going to be leaned on more heavily because you're going to have to do a lot more homework and dig heavily. Just dig into those parts that you have access to or that you have interest in. But some of you are not going to. You also may ask if someone else is interested. Like Mark, he did the range stuff. I listen to Mark because Mark was good. He knew. He was my guide.

I do education, the kid thing, whatever it is about education. But that is my suggestion to you. Because you don't have time to go through what we've gone through in four years, you're going to have to do some homework. There's no other way around it. Specialize and find the areas you're interested in in my opinion.

Leslie Wheelock: Thank you, Jerry. Mr. Meyer.

Ben Meyer: Thank you and good morning. My name is Ben Meyer. I'm with the National FFA Organization. It's a pleasure to stand before your council today, and speak, and hopefully answer questions. I think I'll follow what I've heard earlier

this morning about brevity and keeping things short, and then hopefully answer some questions that you might have related to agriculture education and our FFA programs. Some of the things that I brought for you today, I'm not sure what section it's in.

Josiah Griffin: It's in Tab 6, if anyone wants to flip to it.

Ben Meyer: So two quick pieces of paper there to show a little bit of our background and some of the things that I believe this council is interested in visiting about in relation to how programs get started nationally with our agriculture education programs in middle schools and high schools across the country. First and foremost, we are an excited and committed partner to agriculture education outreach in Indian country. We've been on board with various programs - the Youth Summit at the University of Arkansas participation in this event for several years now. Excited about the partnership. It dates back many, many years. We have lots of record and lots of participation from various states at our national events for decades. Formal partnerships dating back to where we celebrated Indian country and the contributions of native youth to agriculture education, we celebrated that in a big way in 2011 at our national convention. We're excited to keep that momentum moving forward.

I've been answering a lot of questions from parents and students this week and at other events on how to get programs in their hometowns and their schools. Some of what I believe there's some curiosity about is Federal Carl Perkins funding, which is a key funding stream for career and technical education. It's not strictly for agriculture education. It's for career and tech ed across the nation.

So not knowing exactly where the questions might lie, I'll stop talking here and stand for questions or unless people would like more background about what brings me here.

Leslie Wheelock: Jerry. Yes, sir.

Jerry McPeak: I'm Jerry McPeak. Ben, it's good to have you here. In 2007, I think it was, for the national convention we got a lot of allies in American Indians. I think that was the first time ever that it's been done or the only time it's been done. Is that right?

Ben Meyer: For a major cross organization celebration, that's right. Yeah, it was a great year.

Jerry McPeak: It probably was a very positive thing. I would say this to those of you who are here sitting here, because we actually approached it with the Shoshone-Bannock. By the way, if you missed that deal - those of you who are here with us - I've learned so much, I couldn't believe it, after visiting them. But having said that, well, you folks are

complaining about not having FFA programs in your schools and in your areas. You have got to be willing to make a commitment yourself and a financial commitment yourself. Do not expect FFA, or your state, or the federal government to put you in an FFA program in. That's not realistic and it's probably not even right to do it. That's enabling.

You've got to make an investment yourself. When you finally make that investment yourself, yes, it's worth it. But whoever the tribe is, whether it's the Creeks, and we have a big investment in ours, so I guess this I mean to say [sounds like]. But we've put a bunch of money into the youth education - agriculture education. If you're going to have FFA in your program, you need to be ready with your tribes to finance products and sell. If you don't do that, it isn't going to work. Thank you.

Leslie Wheelock: Sarah.

Sarah Vogel: Sarah Vogel. Following up on Jerry's remarks. I mean there are only a handful of people in this room, but I think you're speaking to Indian country in general. I think it would be interesting to hear Mr. Meyer's remarks on what he thinks could be done to improve contact with Indian country in general. Because I have been to, I don't know how many farm organization meetings. You go to the Farmers Union Meeting in Mountrail County, pretty much white. It's an Indian

country though because the Indians are there. The Indians are not at that meeting. They're at a different meeting of the Port Bristol [phonetic] Land and Livestock Association.

But there is, let's call it segregation. Cultural. Not necessarily required, but there are challenges reaching the people that need to start this. And if there is an FFA chapter in say Mountrail County, they need to have outreach also to the native kids. I don't know that they do or don't. I'm just picking one county because it is Indian country. But there's not enough working together. Not necessarily adversarial, but they just don't. So I'd like to hear from Chris how we could follow up on Jerry's recommendation.

Jerry McPeak: Before you go, I have a question, Sarah. Are you saying that there are ag FFA Chapters in your areas who have access to Native American kids who aren't getting those Native American kids?

Sarah Vogel: Yeah. Granted I haven't gone to speak at FFA, but I used to do a lot of speaking at FFA. I used to go to conventions. I used to go to that. This was a while ago. There's all white even though our state is not, even in towns in Indian country. Just looking at the little map of North Dakota, I mean, the state I know and the state Tawney knows, her in South Dakota, there should be flags there but I don't see those little flags in some of the states. So I think that outreach is

not just to the tribe's outreach. There should be a really -- but I bet, Chris, you have something to say.

Chris Beyerhelm: I do.

Sarah Vogel: All right. Good.

Chris Beyerhelm: Thank you for opening up that door. There would be three things I want to share to that point because it's an excellent point. We are working sincerely to address that across all minority groups, not just Indian country. We recognize that in certain programs the chapter is not as reflective as the school population as it should be, and that's wrong. That's absolutely wrong. I'm a former teacher myself. I now do this administrative work. The last place I taught was with the Salish, Kootenai, and Pend d'Oreilles people in Western Montana. The best thing I ever did as a professional myself. Learning about that and how that works to respond to the community and look like the community has shaped a lot of the work that I do now. So what we're doing at the national level is we're providing every chapter, about 8,000 of our chapters nationwide, with their school data from the educational clearinghouse system. Whether that's private, parochial or public school, every school has that in the system that says this is what your school looks like gender-wise, race-wise, everything on down the line.

Then we're providing the chapter data that's supplied by the chapter. Now that's only as good as what's supplied. A lot of what we did is non-disclosed, but we do have that opportunity to provide that. We're asking every agriculture teacher to look at their school data and look at their chapter data and see if there's some sort of reasonable match-up there. If their school data says that, yeah, this school's 25 percent Native and 15 percent Hispanic and the rest Caucasian, does the chapter look like that? If it doesn't, why not? What sort of barriers - intentional or otherwise - are being put up? We can't micromanage and control all 8,000 of those, but we're providing the data so hopefully schools and chapters can decide to make a difference on their own.

Secondly, with that, in working on outreach -- and I'm not intimately knowledgeable at this. I've seen some things from 30,000 feet. We would ask or we would think, if there's an opportunity to invest and provide inspiration, we would love for more agriculture teachers to be vetted and to come from Indian country to go to the university and to go back in the program that I'm not intimately familiar with that I was referencing earlier - would be health care.

Again I'm not an expert, I believe there are programs sourcing health care workers out of Indian country to go get trained and then go back and work. Or at least there was in the

state that I live in I'm familiar with things like that. Those sorts of things we're working to provide agriculture teachers. There's a shortage nationwide. There are a couple of routes - the traditional four-year university route, and then a lateral entry route using life experience. We think there's a great need and a great opportunity for more native teachers to teach in Indian country.

Lastly, we would love to continue like that 2007 and 2011 work somehow partnering at a greater level somehow - whether it's working through IAC, whether it's working through what happens in Fayetteville, whether it's partnering to have some sort of mini conference within our national convention in October. We see the youth that are involved in events like these and then the youth that are involved in FFA, and there's huge enthusiasm. What can we do to better network that? What can we do to say were you at one of these IAC or otherwise events? Now you're at our event. Let's have an hour where you get together and socialize, check in on each other's plans, and work some things forward again. That'd be some of our thoughts.

Leslie Wheelock: Mr. McPeak.

Jerry McPeak: Thank you, ma'am. This is Jerry McPeak. Ben, now you're in my real house - education and agriculture. All that stuff is great however many thousands of teachers said it's exactly what we talked about at the USDA. The people in

the Washington D.C. level were supposedly -- and I'm sure that we're telling these folks about what had to happen, but it wasn't happening. I'm telling you it ain't happening until you make their sandals hurt or their moccasins hurt - that teacher, it ain't happening. So you can tell us stuff from 50,000 feet. It's not even happening at your state level, sir.

I'm from Oklahoma, and we're pretty good. All these are people from Oklahoma. We've got Indians everywhere, but we're totally incorporated into the society. Black however not so much so. But those people who aren't doing it and are all minorities whether it's black, or Indian, or Hispanic aren't doing it. And those teachers aren't doing it. So until their feet hurt or until you hurt someone on the state level and make them understand we're not kidding, it isn't going to happen. And Ben, it ain't happening. Can I explain it any further?

Ben Meyer: I take your point wholeheartedly. I truly do.

Jerry McPeak: I think that I get it.

Ben Meyer: Yes. And I've heard you speak before in Fayetteville. I know where your passion lies, and I appreciate it. I would say that we, as a not-for-profit student organization, without a law being armed and without a direct arm that way can and should do more. I will work with our people so we will do more. I will also say that a lot of that would rely

within Carl Perkins funding, which is the other handout, and that's a different ball of wax.

Jerry McPeak: And we look good. I mean no problem with getting the feel.

Ben Meyer: I get what you're saying though. I absolutely do. We're not acting like it doesn't happen. I would welcome direct recommendations in your mind to, as you say, make people's sandals hurt. I'm not sure what that would look like.

Jerry McPeak: You can imagine. I got a direct recommendation from [inaudible].

Mark Wadsworth: There you go. Now, Ben you can call Chris, and Ben, is it --

Ben Meyer: It's the latter. It's Ben.

Mark Wadsworth: Mark Wadsworth here from the Shoshone-Bannock tribes. This is basically why I am here is that I have a few friends living in Blackfoot, Idaho - the Indian county at one time, and maybe still is, the number one producing potato county in the United States. As part of that, I want to work for -- I got some good friends that were in FFA and they said why don't you come over and take a few of these courses? It was with welding, which was cool. It was about breeds of animals. Then it also got into a point when I was a senior in high school and a guy said agriculture just isn't about production of

animals and production of crops. They also need agriculture economists or an agri businessman.

That's what opened the door for me to pursue an agriculture business degree. I know this would work, but I was the only Native American back in 1979-'80 in the whole FFA classroom. I guess I wanted to know on the statistics that you have here, you say a percentage of chapters serving Native country or whatever - counties or whatever - less than 10 percent. Those numbers, where did they come from? Who was your statistician? Is it valid stuff that you used in reports?

Secondly, I want to get into this Carl Perkins that you were mentioning. And I see that during 2013, because this has been one of our major pushes, is to have more funding going into extension across the whole United States for this endeavor to teach our youth and our people. In 2013 to '15 they had extra funding. We as the council were in existence then. This is the first time I've heard about this and seen how that happened. I'd like to know the background of that also.

Ben Meyer: Sure. I'll answer the data question first. Is it academically reliable? Not necessarily. It's self-reported, and non-disclosed is a legal option. When this was pooled, I'd say in some states we had over 60 percent of our FFA members report or their adviser report non-disclosed. That's not good, but it's a legal option. You can't force somebody to answer

their racial background or their ethnic background. So that leaves a lot of unanswered data on that map there.

In terms of Carl Perkins and extra funding and what happens where and what goes with that, Carl Perkins is a small piece of the funding puzzle for Career and Technical Education. The bulk of Career and Technical Education funding in the public school system comes from the state and local level. State and local level provides the salary for teachers. State and local level provides most of the consumable expenses.

Carl Perkins is a federal funding program that kind of finds its way into two main pots, the first one being Secondary Career and Technical Education spread out amongst - so we are talking ag education, business ed, family consumer science, woodshop and so on and so forth, for permanent type items or tangible type items. Non-consumables, but not salaried either.

The second main area it goes into is the technical or the two-year college system which then has some different outreaches, where you see some of the handouts that I provided there, into the tribal college system, some special one-time monies. I don't administer this, I don't speak on behalf of Carl Perkins. I just speak with some knowledge about it - that then has gone into tribal colleges for the purpose of advancing Career and Technical Education. If this were to be renewed again with some of these extra funding, we see that there might

be a possibility to partner with a secondary school to provide some sort of two plus two or articulated partnership to say if we can be doing something in agriculture at the postsecondary level. Could we work with somebody in agriculture at the high school level and start walking some students up through? Sort of helping them earn some college credits while they're at the high school in the area of agriculture.

I don't know whether all these programs are funded. The links are online. They can be read about, I do know. You mentioned Blackfoot, so Fort Hall area. Right? Previous to this job that I do now, I was the state director for ag education in Idaho. I came over to request the school board there at Fort Hall and visited about starting an agriculture education program. I understand that challenge because that's a fully-funded BIE school. Is that correct? It still is?

So the question at the time at the school there at Fort Hall was how can we access the state-added cost funds, what they're called in Idaho, and the additional Perkins funds to make this possible. Unfortunately those funding streams and access points are really tricky and really difficult for a fully federally-funded school.

Again, I'm not employed by the feds, I don't speak for them. I just speak with some knowledge. The feds will say that we're already providing 100 percent of the funding for the

school there, we're not going to double up on that with funding that we're sending to the state to go back to a federally-funded entity. Be that right or wrong, I'm not sure. I think there's opportunity to access some of these funds. I think there might also be an opportunity to look at that funding formula or to look at that and say if the feds are funding 100 percent of a BIE school, then here's an area that's missing. So we need more out of that. That's a different pot of funds. That's not Perkins. But I've been to your school and I walked the halls. I absolutely sympathize with what you're asking about.

Leslie Wheelock: Yes, ma'am. Ms. Angel.

Angela Peter: This is Angel Peter from Alaska. I was wondering what kind of, do you have any programs in Alaska?

Ben Meyer: Yes. Palmer, Delta Junction, North Pole, two in Fairbanks, Soldotna [phonetic] and then a series of programs in the IDEA Alaska homeschool network. Kodiak Island, that's another one.

Angela Peter: Can any of the programs -- I'm sorry, I could have read on this more, but bond internships?

Ben Meyer: I'll need more specifics. What? Which? Do our FFA programs specifically --?

Angela Peter: I don't care what it is. But do you have money to fund a program like internships? That's what we're using in Alaska. The whole TCD [phonetic] movement just started

and we need kids, people that live in the region, working in the region that are from Alaska and know what's what. So that's why I'm asking it.

Ben Meyer: So our model's based on three components that overlap. Our agriculture education model is FFA, which is the students that are in the blue jackets which are competing and earning prizes and earning money doing things to show off their skills in agriculture and natural resources. Our second component is the classroom where they're learning something in an academic setting. Our third component is what we call our supervised agricultural experience or, for lack of a better term, an internship or a job placement.

We're not per se funding that. We're not giving students or employers money to make that work, but we train our teachers to oversee that. We train our teachers how to get students into those avenues. So they might own an animal that they would show at a fair, and that would be their supervised work experience. Or, and I think what you're asking about, they might go to work for somebody to gain experience at the high school level. Then our teachers are trained to evaluate that, to grade that student, and then to show them growth through it. So they don't do the same task nine months in a row. They're moving up and moving through that system of that employer with the ultimate

goal of then hopefully getting a job in that field. Do we have direct funds that pay that? No.

Angela Peter: A follow-up.

Jerry McPeak: I don't think that folks understand the difference between FFA and vocational agriculture.

Ben Meyer: Okay. So agriculture education or as it's [indiscernible] referenced, vocational agriculture, is the class. That's a whole different subject in Alaska because of how some things are recognized up there. I'm happy to visit with you later about that. But in 49 other states and two territories, it's an academic class within the class day, within the student's schedule. They go take math. They take choir. They take business. And they take an agriculture class. They are scalable and stackable. They start out at an introductory level and work their way up in skill area. That's what happens within the school days. The FFA part is part and parcel of that. A student can't be at FFA without being in the academic class itself. Does that provide some --?

Angela Peter: So how do we get your program in Native country, Indian country, in Alaska? Every one of the places that you said we don't have no kids are wanting to learn agriculture. We have interns now. Tyonek does three or four interns, and they've had to raise the money. The money is the problem really, but getting those kids, talking to the school

district because that's what really we have a challenge with. If we could make the curriculum like they did moose browse. They made a whole curriculum and they got credit for it in science. So that's the kind of stuff. Moose browse, yeah, they cut 15,000 willows and cutting over the winter. Then they planted 15,000 willows like that. It was a moose browse.

Sarah Vogel: Oh, browse. I never - okay. Thank you. Angel teaching.

Jerry McPeak: We thought that frankly we had it last night.

Mark Wadsworth: Just one final concern I have is that, since you brought up reservation, did you guys ever look at the 2501 CFR in which it states that BIA funding can be basically a kosher [sounds like] or a matching fund towards any other government funding? Which I think that if that's through the BIA, it should carry over to the BIE.

Ben Meyer: Sure. I can't say that we looked at that specifically. We talked about some things at that school board meeting. The issue that the school board and the superintendent at the time wanted, they wanted the access to the funds that Blackfoot and Pocatello and Highland and American Falls and every other school in the state all had from the State Department in Boise. They wanted that same funding stream. So

for a school the size of Fort Hall, that might have been let's just say \$30,000 or \$40,000 a year in federal funds.

In really all the states they won't double up on that funding, and that was the sticking point. We would have happily chartered, happily approved, happily done everything to sanction an aged and an FFA program at Fort Hall, but there was no speedbump there. It was access to that second set of funds, which I understand. I definitely understand.

Mark Wadsworth: Now when you call it state, it isn't coming from the state?

Ben Meyer: It is because Washington, D.C. sends it to Boise and Boise sends it out.

Mark Wadsworth: Well, it's federal funding to the state.

Ben Meyer: Yes, yes, yes.

Mark Wadsworth: We have the same barrier with calling our state NRCS and stuff.

Ben Meyer: There you go. There you go.

Mark Wadsworth: There needs to be that clarification that it's federal.

Ben Meyer: Right. I hope we're not talking to me specifics. I just know this instance here. The state does not recognize Fort Hall as one of 115 high school districts in Idaho. So when they're looking at their funding model, they say, okay, we've got 115 high school districts. Boom, boom,

boom, boom, boom. Here's how everything goes out. Fort Hall doesn't get funded, and that might be it. I think Plummer-Worley does. I think Lapwai does. But is Fort Hall the only BIE school in the state?

Mark Wadsworth: I can't talk for the whole state.

Ben Meyer: Yeah. And that's a problem. But the state would claim - and I don't work for them - well, our hands are tied, we're not allowed to step on the federal government in terms of funding and how things work. We have to hands off.

Leslie Wheelock: Mr. Rose.

Mark Rose: Yes, thank you. Ben, just real quick. And I apologize to the council members, to the ones here, I'm representing NRCS here. There are three programs I want to mention. I assume you're probably familiar with the 1994 Tribal Scholars Program.

Ben Meyer: Yes.

Mark Rose: The next one is the Washington Internships for Native Students.

Ben Meyer: Not as familiar. No.

Leslie Wheelock: It doesn't exist anymore.

Mark Rose: It doesn't exist?

Leslie Wheelock: As of about two weeks ago.

Mark Rose: Okay. Well, that takes care of that. Thank you, Leslie.

Leslie Wheelock: The 1994 Scholars, that program has not been in operation for the last three years.

Mark Rose: Right. That's what my notes say here also. So the last that I have is the Indian National Conservation Lands.

Leslie Wheelock: I think it's still operating.

Mark Rose: At least one of the three to provide awareness to Native American students who are eligible to enroll in the colleges. It's an agency pursuit that they would be able to apply for the Pathways Program. As an agency, not just USDA as a whole but also NRCS, we are in dire need of like what Angela Peter's talked about. We need the local people with our agency in the local areas to understand how to assist the local people, and talk their language, and understand their culture. We have a big gap there within USDA and within NRCS to be able to do that. I hope National FFA can help support some of those programs and make those aware at the local level so those students can apply. And they'll have a paying job via the Pathways Program.

Ben Meyer: Okay. We are aware. I think we can do better. I think we could connect maybe offline. We are working in a 30,000-foot sense on just identifying what agriculture jobs are. We've been fighting with the Department of Labor on this issue, on recognizing what an agriculture job is. If you ask the Department of Labor, there are three or four out there and the

rest all fall into something else. And we say, no, there's not. There are hundreds of jobs in agriculture. Yes, you might code them as something else. So we gave up on that and we said we'll go figure it out ourselves.

So we've got a list of 235 and growing of specific agriculture jobs. We've got a website that helps our students explore their interest and then map those out to jobs and what college it would take. We can do better. We're continually working on this model. We're trying to get students. We've got over a million students that voluntarily take an agriculture class every year in the U.S. We've got nearly 700,000 of them that are in FFA voluntarily because the two go hand-in-hand there.

When they graduate high school and go on to college, that number seems to wander and wane and go other directions. Students' interests are pulled other ways or life takes them in other directions. We are trying to figure out how to keep that million students a year interested in agriculture for a career.

Mark Rose: Thank you. I'm a product of FFA and 4-H.

Ben Meyer: Thank you.

Mark Rose: And now I'm in a leadership position within the agency. It's very invaluable. That's some of the things I told FFA students Tuesday night, when I saw them get out and explore. Then you can come back, but you also might stay out. I stayed

out. I have something else to do with my local community, but I'm also helping them at the same time.

Ben Meyer: Sure.

Leslie Wheelock: We're running a little bit over, but we also ate into some of [indiscernible] time. So I'm going to start over here. Tawney, and then I walk over here to Roselynn.

Tawney Brunsch: This is Tawney Brunsch. Ben, I'm just wondering because I've been new to this. How do you conduct your outreach then? Are you operating off of some lists that the state generates then as to what schools to target? Because it seems to me like if you're using a state-generated list and the BIE schools on the reservations might not be on that list, what kind of outreach is currently being conducted to the schools on the reservations?

Ben Meyer: Great question. We're a federated organization, for lack of a better term. So we have a large national umbrella model. Then, as it works its way down, our states do handle a lot of that work. So when we talk about visiting schools and providing leadership outreach, our state associations and our state FFA officers are doing that. That's not something they schedule through us or not something we train them on, which probably is a gap honestly. So as our two non-native students go out and conduct the chapter visit on leadership topics, they're going to conduct the same chapter

visit in a non-native school as they would in a native school. Admittedly probably there's room for growth there.

Tawney Brunsch: Is there outreach being conducted on reservations?

Ben Meyer: There is. There is. A reservation school would have the very same series of visits from our student leadership as a non-reservation school. There's not particularly outreach happening to schools that don't have one of our programs. We're in a position, because we're short of teachers, we don't have a surplus of teachers. This is where Indian country could help. We're short of teachers so we're not going out to schools that don't have our program and say start our program, because if we do and they do it, we might not have a teacher to put in there.

Tawney Brunsch: But it's kind of one of those things like what comes first, right?

Ben Meyer: It is. So we have a national campaign to try to get more teachers. We're doing everything we can. We know in almost every minority community that teachers tend to do better when they have a good understanding of the local culture, or even better when they're from that community. That's where we could do more. We need more teachers from these locations that don't have programs that would go back there and teach. We have lots of success stories of teachers who aren't from the

area they're teaching in and they're doing very well, but that's not the case everywhere.

Tawney Brunsch: You partner with the local tribal colleges serving those reservation communities?

Ben Meyer: Yes and no. That's been a mixed bag. We don't have a big program doing this, but sometimes when we make that outreach - well, here we don't have agriculture. We don't offer that. Then upon further review the answer might be, well, there's a horse program and there's some things with natural resources, and forestry, or water or something. But it's not talked about as agriculture. Maybe all of you can educate me about that.

So when we're providing our students those directions and those avenues to go and they're asking about agriculture or interested in agriculture at the tribal college level and they go and search a website or they go pull something up, it's not there. Then they either don't go or they go somewhere else. That's not an official answer. That's just an anecdotal thing that I've seen.

Leslie Wheelock: Ms. Yazzie?

Roselynn Yazzie: Yes, this is Roselynn. I was going to ask about the outreach program. Again, I'm a product of the FFA in the school that I attended. It's a border town of the Navajo reservation. In our county there are a couple of teachers per

se that are FFA. They do provide a very good outreach program to the schools, more of the junior high and the high schools that are around there. But, again, I guess your interested level would start with your smaller grades as they move up because by the time you get to junior high in high school, you're pretty much kind of set on what you want to do. So from that, the two outreach people geared toward the agriculture. I'm just lucky that we have one of the biggest farms there. So it was here.

Again, agriculture is a vast variety. In working with FFA, the farm and one of the schools that we have a local on the reservation which is the T'iis Ts'ozi [phonetic], the Crownpoint Community School and the NMSU or New Mexico State University. It's also a very agricultural college. So working with the college brought me back to the farm, again, just to follow up through the process of the students.

Again, going back to the farm, because of the agricultural jobs, that is our CEO was 45 years. The COO we've been looking. I feel as a COO on and off, on and off, so somebody that's not only in just the farming part, also the administrative part, someone looking at the ergonomics of the farming industry, the water industry, and all of that. So I was lucky to be in that community with a good outreach, a big farm, a good college that supported the whole process.

So, again, we're probably looking at colleges that would, and then our internship program with the farm. We have a good internship program which provides students a four-year with the college funding. So they go through the farm and different areas of the farm of their interest. We have students that come in during the summertime that look at do I really want to get into this farming industry. It might not be putting seed in the ground, but it might be the agronomy side of it.

So there's a vast opportunity out there. Again it's just to follow up with these students because that was the success of us. Out of the five crops we have, all five crops now have students that have graduated with the agronomic degrees. They have come back to fill those crop managers position and working their way to the COO, to the CEO's position. So a lot of follow up was the big success for the farm.

Ben Meyer: There's that constant connection. Two quick thoughts, because I appreciate everything that you said there on ways that I think we could partner better. So you talked about those opportunities on the farm or whatever that might be. I think our non-native agriculture teachers teaching in a native environment in Indian country probably could use some help. They could use some outreach for what those opportunities might look like. I think that that's something that doesn't cross their mind right away, be that good or bad. But I think there's

probably a barrier in driving up to the farm, driving up to the nursery, driving up to the greenhouse, whatever that is and saying you have internships so what would that look like.

If there are things that you know or jobs you could create, even unpaid jobs that you could create to get students agriculture experience, and there's a program in a community, making those jobs available and putting them in the email inbox of that agriculture teacher I think could go a long ways. Then we'll work with our teachers on our side to say are you doing everything you can to ask about that, because they are balancing an awful lot of things. They have a huge job responsibility and sometimes this doesn't come to the top of their mind.

The second one you mentioned, you're right, we absolutely recognize that an interest in agriculture has to start young. We focus our scope in Grade 7 through 12. There are many, many people out there, and I'm one of them too as a former teacher, that would agree that interest needs to be cultivated earlier. It's not where our focus is, but it's not that we disagree with that. It's that we can only do so much so we put all of our efforts in that Grade 7 through 12.

We are a strong, strong partner with 4-H which reaches out to students earlier. It's out of the school system though. We're in the school system. And then every state has some sort of ag in the classroom program. Again, we do everything we can

to support that effort and initiative. What we do do internally is that we have different curriculums so our high school students can go down to elementary schools and provide some touch points, but we're not teaching those classes there. So I want to reaffirm that I agree with everything you said and I share some of where we're at the time.

Leslie Wheelock: Sherry Crutcher.

Ben Meyer: I do have cards.

Sherry Crutcher: Just real quick. I see you have Owyhee on your map here.

Ben Meyer: Yes.

Sherry Crutcher: I know our kids there, it's through the school district. Even though the school is on the reservation, the minority of our kids that go there are white. So the kids that go there to the school are mainly Indians.

Ben Meyer: Say where again?

Sherry Crutcher: Owyhee. You got Owyhee?

Ben Meyer: Oh. Owyhee, Nevada. I'm sorry. I got it.

Sherry Crutcher: You got them on your map there.

Ben Meyer: Yeah. [Cross-talking] I thought I heard Owyhee. Yeah, Duck Valley on the Nevada-Idaho border. I'm tracking with you, yes.

Sherry Crutcher: That's where I'm from.

Ben Meyer: Very good.

Sherry Crutcher: But our kids there have to come up with their own funds. Well, before the teacher that was there didn't have any interest. They were just there for teaching. Now we have a teacher there that put the land in production.

Ben Meyer: Ryan-somebody.

Sherry Crutcher: Ryan Carpenter.

Ben Meyer: Thank you, yeah.

Sherry Crutcher: So when they come off, the crops come off, they sell the hay that goes back in to FFA. So Carl Perkins, would that kind of funding work for Owyhee?

Ben Meyer: Is Duck Valley in Owyhee a BIE school or state of Nevada school?

Sherry Crutcher: State of Nevada school.

Ben Meyer: Then yes, they're getting Carl Perkins Funding.

Sherry Crutcher: They are?

Ben Meyer: They should be, yeah.

Sherry Crutcher: I bet they're not. We need to follow-up.

Ben Meyer: Okay. Yeah, I'd be happy to ask.

Sherry Crutcher: Thank you.

Ben Meyer: You raised another very good point. I know time is tight. The funding pieces are strong and successful programs. I think Mr. McPeak could reference those that he sees in Oklahoma do extensive external fundraising. As a former teacher who taught in Indian country, I understand those

limitations. I don't know how to overcome them. We offer a lot of grants to help with things, but our big programs, we are always attending big state national events and having student populations - they're doing a ton of fundraising because the school doesn't provide them everything that they need. They're doing an absolute monumental level of fundraising.

I do believe that would contribute to our lack of diversity at state national events. I think we have some students at the local level. But coming from communities where fundraising is difficult and a challenge and everything is fundraised for, then it makes it difficult to get to an event. That's a long ways away. That requires a lot of money. I don't have a solution for that. I want to just provide that I acknowledge that.

Leslie Wheelock: I am going to cut this short, if I may. Mr. Meyer, thank you very much. We have possibly continuing questions for FFA. I think that this has been a terrific introduction for this council. I really want to thank you for being here today and for helping us understand a little bit more.

Ben Meyer: Sure.

Leslie Wheelock: Thank you very much.

Ben Meyer: Thank you.

Leslie Wheelock: So council members, I've got 12:22. Let's reconvene at 1:00 to the extent we can all get out there and get food and get back in here.

Angela Peter: That was really good. I mean I thought so.

Jerry McPeak: Yeah.

Leslie Wheelock: Thank you. Thanks, Josiah, for recording that. Okay, the food court. Well, let's do a little logistics here. The food court, you go down to the casino as if you were going to a wing. Do you know what that is?

Carl-Martin Ruiz: I'm going to head down there so --

Leslie Wheelock: Okay. You'll go down. Go with Carl-Martin. If you are going to the food court, come with us, if you're going for hotdogs. Please do not leave things of value in the room. We're not planning on leaving anybody here and --
[Pause]

Connie Holman: -- published earlier. There's also an additional guide that we're in the process of clearing which talks about servicing the options and things like that. Hopefully I'll have an update on that in just a few minutes. It's where it's at, but it is going through a clearance process.

Sarah Vogel: I think when we had our last committee meeting, I think that was prior to September, we and Jim, all agreed that it was rather urgent that it get out because of the need. That also ties in with number 38 about the mediation

programs and all that work because the ag economy is in a world of hurt. It's going to be like the '30s. It's going to be like the '80s and the more knowledge especially about servicing and so on. So yeah, I really look forward to hearing on that and then let somebody else --

Tawney Brunsch: I just want to chime in on that part because I was on the Credit Committee where we developed this, our recommendation with Jim. It sounds kind of soft for the newer council members. Honestly it's like, geez, really, this is all we can recommend that we do, is come up with an updated real language guide? But it's important in that not only making sure that it's in language that potential borrowers can understand but also that it can be shared with other organizations that are providing that outreach to potential borrowers, that being the native city of tribes like Lakota Funds.

If I have the plain language handbook in front of me, I'm much more likely to be able to better explain that to my borrower. Because I really believe that this comes down to tribal members aren't utilizing the programs that are out there and available because they don't know about them basically, so any tool I have is going to improve that outreach effort.

Josiah Griffin: If I may tag on to that. Again this is Josiah. In looking at the clearance process, I believe that

there was some concern that the release of the guide would have been delayed after the calendar year pushing it into January, if not later. So if I recall correctly, the recommendation was to help ensure that we stay on track.

Tawney Brunsch: So who is our best hope on that then? Is Jim going to be there forever? Can he continue to follow up? Because part of this discussion was that it was nearly completed when we visited with him in August.

Connie Holman: That's great. I will say this. We've added some new programs. So rather than put out a guide that we knew would be not up-to-date at the time that we put it out, we did pull it back and made some changes. The clearance process is rather lengthy. To your question about whether or not Jim would be there. He is not a political appointee, so his intentions are to be there at least end of 2018. So he will continue to follow up on this. Hopefully, before my presentation, I'll get an additional update on some of this information.

Leslie Wheelock: Next item, Erin.

Erin Parker: This is referencing Items 13 and 14 about FRTEP, the Federally-Recognized Extension Program, for tribes. I just have a quick question and I'll try to use as few words as possible, Mr. McPeak. There's an increase of 2.8 million in the explanatory notes from OBPA at USDA for FRTEP. That was on the

president's budget. Do we know if that has remained in either at the House or the Senate bills?

Leslie Wheelock: We haven't seen it in either House or Senate.

Erin Parker: Okay. Well, that answered my question. Thank you.

Sarah Vogel: I think the funding formula for FRTEP requires a legislative fix, and I know we've had this conversation with the people at USDA before about getting that fixed. I try to get it fixed through my senator. I was unsuccessful. But I think it has to be done because, otherwise, this problem with the ever skinnier pieces of pie for every FRTEP program and the annual request for money and having to waste their time applying for new funding each and every year is just going to continue in perpetuity. So a legislative fix. The language is there, I know it's available. It just needs to be pursued. But to me, it's like when it says in process, repositioning of FRTEP to allow for additional funding while eliminating competition, that requires a legislative fix. So it's not really in process at the USDA level to --

Leslie Wheelock: Excuse me. To a certain extent, it can be done in appropriations. If we can move it out from that line item, we were told to work on that component. I understand what you're saying, but that's the piece that we were trying to move.

Sarah Vogel: And that's gone now. It's not in.

Leslie Wheelock: Right now it hasn't been changed. So the appropriation on that line item is still within appropriations where it has always sat, which is in the competitive appropriations package.

Sarah Vogel: Does that mean it's not been fixed?

Leslie Wheelock: Correct.

Sarah Vogel: Okay. Then I'll just toss it out to people. If we can't -- I mean USDA still obviously can't fix it, so there's got to be other avenues.

Josiah Griffin: If I may on that point - this is Josiah - at 4:00 Trent Teegerstrom, who is the tribal extension director for Arizona State University, will be presenting on the economic impact of FRTEP in Arizona. He may have additional thoughts.

Leslie Wheelock: Next. Tawney.

Tawney Brunsch: I've got one, number 11. The secretary should develop training opportunities for USDA Bureau of Indian Affairs staff to facilitate, and collaborate, and encourage increased access to capital throughout Indian country. FSA is planning additional cross-trainings in 2017. Connie, do you have any updates? Do you know if that's still --? Do we have a schedule? It would be helpful if we knew those dates in advance.

Connie Holman: This is Connie. I do not have a schedule.

Tawney Brunsch: Do you know if it's still on the works or it's still planned to happen?

Connie Holman: I am not entirely sure. I'll check on that as well.

Leslie Wheelock: Connie, this is something that Linda Cronin was working on and has introduced directly to BIA and is waiting for some set-up. I'm not quite sure where it is.

Mark Wadsworth: It's also, Connie, in Item 10, a public announcement on the CEO opportunity. Is that coming through at FSA or how is that public announcement --

Josiah Griffin: This is Josiah. As one of my other hats, as I mentioned earlier, I help to coordinate the program outreach on behalf of the Office of Tribal Relations. Connie Holman and her team had been gracious enough to take a first stab at a public service announcement podcast. So we are hoping to get that slated either December or early January. We just need to finalize the timeline with our Office of Communication.

Mark Wadsworth: I guess this is going to be an announcement just about USDA or about FSA?

Josiah Griffin: That's a great question. The initial goal of the public service announcement is to help raise awareness of the microloan program. Once we get a firmer procedural foundation as to how the system operates from start to finish,

then we'll be able to start introducing other public service announcements targeted toward tribal lands on USDA programs.

Leslie Wheelock: Question and answer? Comments? Next item, Sarah.

Sarah Vogel: I'm trying to choose which one. Okay. Number 9 and number 40 talk about potential synergy in context and working together with the Center for Indian Country Development at Minneapolis. They are ramping up. I think they have four full-time professional staff, plus a network of all the Federal Reserve banks around the country. Patrice Kunesh, as everybody knows, is the director. I think that the Office of OTR, because they're joined at the hip with the Center for Indian Country Development especially with regard to credit, there are so many overlaps between the work that they're doing and the work that USDA is doing. I think it's really a marvelous opportunity for collaboration. So it just says it's in process.

Leslie Wheelock: I know we can update part of that. Sue Woodworth [phonetic] from the office called our office probably three weeks ago letting us know that they're having this webinar on - what is it, don't blow it, the Blackfeet. It's the Blackfeet.

Female Voice: Yes, we haven't resonated that a couple of -- sorry.

Leslie Wheelock: Okay. The Blackfeet piece, I get it. Anyway, we cross-posted that. We posted it and sent it out to, I kind of known that world, to try to make sure that everybody had it and at least knew about it to the extent that they ever asked us for help. We've been working with the Minneapolis Fed. At least for the three years I've been here we have presented at their organizations. We've gone in with the Trust office at BIA and had meetings, and discussions, and commentary and helped them when they were putting the program together. So I'm hoping that my departure doesn't cause that to fall apart. I don't think it will because Patrice certainly knows how to get a hold of our office. So we're relying a little bit on Patrice's connection and her knowledge of USDA.

Sarah Vogel: Right.

Mark Wadsworth: Leslie, Mark Wadsworth here, this is going back to your regional [sounds like] slide presentation you had on the very end there. You went through the category of other vehicles. The reason why I asked the question about the business planning aspect is that I had an individual who makes her own homemade salsa. And we would like to look in some program within the USDA to, you know, how do I start with even marketing, what type of labelling do I need and all sorts of scenarios. So when you put the business planning in there,

which office were you particularly -- could I direct her to for that scenario?

Leslie Wheelock: Sherry.

Sherry Crutcher: I think with that, Mark, that storage shed loan that they have, you can get like a mobile unit through that. They've got different availabilities now to where she could like buy a refrigerated --

Leslie Wheelock: Right. A mobile refrigerated unit.

Sherry Crutcher: And then go with that, towards that type of training to be brought up to there I think.

Leslie Wheelock: But are you talking about getting into production mode?

Mark Wadsworth: Yes.

Leslie Wheelock: So there are other programs that assist individuals with that. I'm thinking of FMLPP and --

Josiah Griffin: Value-Added Producer Grant.

Leslie Wheelock: And Value-Added Producer Grants. But the problem with the Value-Added Producer Grants is that they're highly competitive, and we've had whole tribal operations competing for them and winning. This year we have not had the same level of success which we're looking into, but I'm thinking there's also a small business microloan that's available through Rural Development. What else?

Female Voice: What is FMLPP put?

Female Voice: That value, what?

Leslie Wheelock: Value-Added Producer Grant, also known as VAPG, is available through Rural Development. The larger the organization, the more likely they are to be competitive in that world or for that program. Individuals? We're racking our brains over here. We'll think about it. Let's get back to you. We know we've got it.

Mark Wadsworth: Well, who's the educator, do you know on the business planning?

Leslie Wheelock: Erin.

Erin Parker: There are regional risk management education centers around the country that should be able to lift some of that burden. A lot of those are stations that land grants. We have the Southern Risk Management Education Center. They should be able to help walk folks through things and help walk folks through things like AgPlan, which is an online free business training tool. We train our youth at our youth summit and they've been pretty successful working with it. So I'm happy to talk afterwards about that.

Leslie Wheelock: There's also businessusa.gov has a lot of programs available within the federal entity for small business. It has a sorting tool where you go and you basically say I'm an individual, I want to get started in this. I'm looking for resources in X and it pops up the programs that are available to

a small business in that kind of an environment or operation.
Sherry, did you have a question or comment? I'm coming back to
Tawney in a minute?

Sherry Crutcher: No.

Leslie Wheelock: I'm sorry. Tawney.

Tawney Brunsch: You're asking for who are the TA providers
to help with the business plan?

Mark Wadsworth: Uh-huh.

Tawney Brunsch: First of all, IAC. But then also, you
know, and I know because we don't have anybody locally either.
But do you have a Native CDFI? Do you have somebody? We can
help a little bit on the phone and we've got all the online.
Everything we do is online now too, so I would say maybe try
some of those resources.

Mark Wadsworth: I appreciate it.

Leslie Wheelock: Connie.

Connie Holman: This is Connie Holman. In addition, FSA
has made several cooperative agreements with several technical
providers that we could share that information. Some of those
have those kind of tools that you might be able to use. So
we'll try to make that list of cooperative agreements available.

Leslie Wheelock: Okay, thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: Thank you.

Leslie Wheelock: Well, that was fun. Anyone else want to jump on that one?

Sarah Vogel: This is Sarah. This is topic number 27. It says the double cropping question was completed. But what happened?

Leslie Wheelock: It's not completed. The letter from Secretary Vilsack went over to Secretary Jewell. We have not received a response to that letter to my knowledge. I started to track that down two weeks ago and just haven't finished trying to track it down.

We have a number of things that Deputy Secretary Scuse is going to help us out with to try to close some of the stuff. I think I'm going to add this to his list if I can't find it. Once those letters start going back and forth in circulation, they're hard to find. But we've got some folks over there who could help us.

Sarah Vogel: All right. The big one, number 33. Do you want to share the gory details?

Leslie Wheelock: No, I don't want to share the gory details. Well, I mean you've got it right there - no response received to multiple requests. When I walked out with the deputy secretary, he walked out with one thing to call over to Interior about, and this is what I went out to talk to him about. Because we have asked in person, we have called, we have

written letters and it's not happening. So the deputy secretary's escalating the MOUs between BIA and USDA agencies, and we added this to his list. We had a person who is working pretty well and now we don't, and it's noticeable. It's hard to get coordination when we don't have that person. So we do recognize it. We have been working on it and have been emailing multiple levels actually. We're trying to get a career person dedicated to the council, a big career person.

Erin Parker: I have a follow-up question to that. This is Erin. If that magically did happen in the next 44 days, what is the effect of the transition on that?

Jerry McPeak: What was the question?

Erin Parker: What would the effect of the transition in administrations be on that? If we did get somebody to come over and consistently meet with the council, is there any guarantee that they would continue to do that? Would the MOU help?

Leslie Wheelock: It's a good question. There's no guarantee. I don't know if an MOU would help or not, but certainly the thing is that it's -- well, let us think about it because I don't know that -- yeah? Mr. McPeak.

Jerry McPeak: Jerry McPeak. That's a little bit, Erin, if I understand your question. We battle to get the BIA here for every meeting, and obviously I have no control over that. So whether the next administration is in or not is almost

irrelevant because they don't change to just ask and get someone in. So to answer your question, we have to think through it with the next administration because they haven't done it so far and they're not doing it so far which is exactly what we experienced out in Indian country, staying [sounds like] with the BIA on other things, right?

Sarah Vogel: Right. I just raised it to scratch the wound. That's all.

Jerry McPeak: I love you and I'm all about it.

Sarah Vogel: On the record.

Jerry McPeak: I'm all about it.

Sarah Vogel: I already talked about at some length and helped her largely with number 18 which ties in with numbers 34, 35, and 36.

Josiah Griffin: If I may, this is Josiah. We have a public comment period starting at 2:00. So respectfully I would ask that this be the last round of recommendations to discuss at this point. We have additional time set aside in the agenda to continue this discussion.

Sarah Vogel: Sure. Anyway, 34, 35, and 36 tie in.

Leslie Wheelock: That's a longer conversation. May we table that until later?

Sarah Vogel: Yes.

Leslie Wheelock: Okay. Thank you. So Connie, Connie Holman, Farm Service Agency.

Connie Holman: This is Connie Holman with the Farm Service Agency. First of all, by way of explanation, while Mr. Radintz couldn't be here with you, he's normally here with the council but he had a medical procedure on Monday. He probably would not be cleared to travel so he opted for me to come instead. Actually, I was in San Diego last week and here this week, and I'm leaving to drive back to D.C. That's 35 hours because I didn't know I was going to have to be here. So I appreciate Leslie changing the agenda just a little bit so that I could get my part in today.

The first thing we'll talk about is this white handout that I did, the whiteboard goals for 2016. For those of you who have been on the council before, you received a much larger report. I think it was kind of substantial that the -- yes, sir?

Jerry McPeak: I'd like to interrupt you for just a moment. This is Jerry McPeak. If any of you need a translation from the Southern version of her language, I'd be happy to translate for you.

Connie Holman: Yes, I get that a lot. And that's okay. For those of you who have been on the council before, like I said, you're accustomed to getting a much larger report that was required by the Keepseagle Settlement. The requirement for that

has essentially lapsed. We can make that report available to you. We chose to do this one since it's a little easier to explain and to discuss. These are whiteboard goals that are provided. This report is provided regularly to the Secretary's office through Josiah in OTR. You'll notice it goes through specifics by state on the Native American applications that are received, those approved, those withdrawn, and those that are rejected.

It also talks about microloan applications that are received specifically from Native Americans during the last fiscal year for the timeframe of October 1, 2015 through September 30th of 2016. It also talks about the new Native American borrowers during FY '16, the direct case load for Native American borrowers. And then the last several pages are specifics, dates that we were requested to report based on the request from the Ombudsperson Joanne Dea. For those of you who know Ms. Dea, we were requested specifically to get specific information on this set of states. So you'll see that information going all the way back to 2010.

Now I will be happy to entertain any questions regarding this information. Or I will be happy to entertain those, if you have questions or comments, when we're offline. Specifically, I wanted to talk a little bit about the OL Microloans.

Leslie Wheelock: We have a question.

Connie Holman: Oh, I'm sorry.

Leslie Wheelock: That's all right.

Female Voice: I'm sorry to keep asking questions. I'm new, so I'm going to ask a lot.

Connie Holman: Okay.

Female Voice: Is it possible to get any of these goals broken down by beginning farmers or young people? Because I work with the native youth a lot in my job, so that's really relevant.

Connie Holman: We have a youth loan program. I can get that information for you.

Female Voice: That would be awesome. Thank you.

Connie Holman: As far as beginning farmers, we can get the information for beginning farmers. We have information for beginning farmers, for Native Americans by gender. It gets difficult to separate those using two or more of those criteria, but I can get the youth loan information. I'll make sure that it gets to Leslie and gets out.

Female Voice: Wonderful. Thank you so much, Connie.

Connie Holman: Uh-huh. No problem. Any other questions. Yes.

Sherry Crutcher: Touching base just a little bit on the application process - when a borrower had never defaulted but has like bad credit, before the application process required you

go to the bank and be denied by two banks before you can qualify for the Farm Service Agency. Now they don't do that anymore. When an applicant applies and they have bad credit, is that a big factor across the nation as far as being denied?

Connie Holman: Let me give you a little history on what you said. At one time we did - we are a lender that can only microloan if conventional credit is not available. One way to do that was to require people to be denied at a bank. That was unnecessary and burdensome in some instances because there are cases we know where credit is not available. So we did try to look at that and changed our requirements. Now we serve by lenders in the area. Every year we write up their criteria.

In most cases, not in all but in most cases, when someone comes in we can look at those and generally tell -- for instance if they're in an area that doesn't have a lot of lenders, they're probably not going to be eligible for a loan, particularly in agriculture credit because not a lot of lenders are always interested in agriculture credit. So we made that easier for loan officers to just write that information in the file.

To your question about whether or not credit is an issue, credit in denial for credit reasons is probably the second largest reason that a loan is rejected as far as being for the owner-operator requirements. So it is an issue. Now we have

tried to make some things easier, for instance, where there are issues that are in a specific period of time. If someone gets hurt or loses a job and their credit issues fall within a specific six to nine months, or twelve months, or something like that. So we've allowed some flexibility for loan officers to make those calls in sales.

If it is for medical reasons, a lot of times you'll have medical bills that go to judgment or collection and they may never have gotten a letter on that. So we have allowed some flexibility on that as well. So in a lot of this, we've tried to give as much flexibility to loan officers as we can. Sometimes that's a double-edge sword, as you can well imagine, because some want to hold a very keen thin line and some are a little more flexible than others. We fight that battle quite often in the national office, but we are there to fight that battle if we need to. If there's someone that is not looking at things quite as -- we try to look in what they say as most favorable to the applicant.

Sherry Crutcher: Well, the reason I was asking is because that's what led them to Keepseagle. It was the denial of applications, you know, people that didn't get their -- and so I just kind of wonder. I mean you've got numbers that's why I'm wondering across the board, because I know of a few in our area that were denied based on bad credit.

Connie Holman: And it is still an issue. It is still the second most likely used reason for rejection. And there are some people who have bad credit. We tried to look at those things. Specifically one of the things that came out, I think, through the Keepseagle claims were that there were some of the medical issues, that things got turned over to judgment and collection, which shouldn't have been. So we try to look at that.

Sarah Vogel: It is more that the Indian Health Service reneged. So it wasn't really the debtor's bad debt; it was the IHS' bad debt. We tried to pound that into the process. And also the having to go around and get rejected a couple of times in the credit desert it just added a little of humiliation that wasn't necessary.

Sherry Crutcher: And I've seen a few people back early in the day walking to a bank and say I need a denial letter so I can qualify for this loan.

Connie Holman: And we have tried to take that away from that situation.

Female Voices: Yeah.

Tawney Brunsch: Could I? Tawney. Sherry, just to address to your question. I know I sound like a broken record, but honestly that's a perfect opportunity for those individuals to be working with. If you don't have a Native CDFI in your area,

contact your credit union who is able to help lower income people, people with challenged credit, get loans to help them correct those issues. But what we do a lot, honestly, is write letters to the collection agencies and stuff. It takes a lot of follow-up proving that the items were paid or whatever. But there are things that you can do that will be noted on your credit report right away that you are working to address that and that will improve your credit.

Sarah Vogel: This is a bit of a broken record, and I think I pounded on poor Joanne Dea for four years. But the comparison, what I don't see here in the statistics, I think these are better than the statistics we had earlier. But I do not see any comparison to the population of Native American farmers or ranchers which is more or less known through the census of agriculture. Not precisely, but somewhat. I guess my question to you would be are these numbers roughly proportionate to what you would expect to see?

The reason why we require the statistics in the Keepseagle Settlement was as a help to USDA so that it could find out where bumps in the road were, where things weren't looking just right and then an opportunity to investigate. The reasons people might not have come in might have been their father, their grandfather, their uncle or their aunt was treated badly and they don't want to -- they haven't even tried. So if you need

outreach to support, we're there for you. Or there are some bad apples occasionally and we find out who they are and what can be done about it.

But without a comparison to the census of agriculture, I'm not sure that this council gets a lot from this. We had it broken out by the ten top states and then all of the counties. It takes work to dig through it, but that's my question to you - did you see anything in here that gave you cause to let's say call a state director or county director saying what's up?

Connie Holman: This information does not take that into consideration. This information that I gave you is strictly from our database, and our database has to do with the loans that we made. We do look at that NAS data in comparison to this. Outreach uses that information a lot, so I will talk to outreach and to Jim about getting a report that compares the two of those to present at the next council meeting because this does not do that. Because this does not do that. This is strictly a performance-based report from farm loan programs database.

Sarah Vogel: Yeah. And these are described as whiteboard goals, but it looks more like they're the numbers. So is the goal the same as what you did?

Leslie Wheelock: Excuse me. This is Leslie. The language is based on the data collection for the secretary. Each agency

has a number of items that they are trying to get to the secretary, and they're called the Secretary's Whiteboard Goals.

Sarah Vogel: Oh. Okay.

Leslie Wheelock: They change from year to year, but they've been fairly consistent. He's a data junkie and these have really helped him better understand what's happening within the department.

Sarah Vogel: Yes. Because I know what's the StrikeForce initiative. It looks at areas of significant poverty and then try to focus programs and so forth. But I think there's going to be areas where you say -- like we've got folks here from New Mexico and Arizona. Every single year that I look at those reports, Arizona in particular we felt should have had more applications based on just the numbers.

Connie Holman: I would say Arizona's probably one of the states that we look at most often.

Roselynn Yazzie: Connie, this is Roselynn. Question. These numbers that you have here, are these loans that are given for businesses, or farming, or ranching on the reservation? Or is it off the reservation?

Connie Holman: They are loans made to individuals who identify themselves as Native American producers, whether it be on the reservation or not on the reservation. And our database does not track reservation versus not being on the reservation.

Sarah Vogel: But you do have counties?

Connie Holman: We do have counties, yes. We do have counties. We could break it down by county.

Roselynn Yazzie: Okay. Because I know, in fact, that there were applicants requesting for loans on the reservation. They aren't providing loans if businesses are on the reservation. They walk away with nothing because the business that they're opening is on the reservation and then they're told no, we can't give loans on --

Connie Holman: Would that be FSA, because we are strictly agriculture. It may be Rural Development.

Roselynn Yazzie: Thank you.

Sarah Vogel: One of the major areas of discrimination that we saw in the Keepseagle case was not loan processing necessarily, but discouraging applications at the door. No point in filing anything because of X, Y, Z. We heard every reason in the book. But that's why I think comparison to the agriculture population is critical. If the secretary is a data junkie, he should have been saying where is the census? I want to have this figured out for me and I'm getting a little excited.

Roselynn Yazzie: I don't want to belabor the point and I'll be very brief. Just to Sarah's point, because I am a data junkie and I don't want to wait for NAS. I'm looking at the

ag's and the stats for Arizona right now and there are 18,475 American-Indian producers in Arizona and there's 41 who applied. So that's why that comparison is really helpful for us I think, to be able to monitor that.

Connie Holman: We'll make sure we do a different report.

Sarah Vogel: Thank you.

Connie Holman: All right. Well, I will move on just briefly because I know I'm running out of time. Just to give you a little bit of statistic on our OL Microloans. It's been a very successful program. It actually is performing better than our regular loan program. Our regular loan program, the delinquency rate is 5 percent. Our Microloan OL rate is just above 2 percent. So it is performing better. We don't have statistics on the farm ownership microloans specifically because they just started in January. The assumption is they probably haven't had time to do yet.

Okay. Well, I do have exciting news really. In October, I believe it was - yeah, I know it was because it's like October the 5th - we introduced two new programs of sort. One of them is the EZ Guarantee. And one of them is the Micro Lender program. Both of those are in our Guaranteed Loan Program. The EZ Guarantee is guaranteed loans equivalent to microloans. So it's reduced paperwork for the Guaranteed Loan Program. The EZ Guarantee is what I think you will probably be the most

interested in because it specifically seeks to involve non-traditional lenders, specifically Native CDFIs, in our guaranteed lending program.

Our hope is what it will do is it will provide another alternative lender in some of your credit desert areas, specifically those who are more familiar with the issues that Native Americans face. Again that went into effect October the 5th, I think it was. We haven't made a whole lot of those, but we're just going into our peak lending season and we expect to see that extensively used. Micro lenders are limited to \$50,000. Any questions on that?

Sarah Vogel: Congratulations.

Connie Holman: Thank you. Thank you. Like I said, the hope is that it will be introduced and get some nontraditional lenders involved.

Sarah Vogel: Actually, Connie, if you could add one more number I think for the benefit of the council. These statistics, I think, are exclusively on the direct lending.

Connie Holman: They are. That is correct.

Sarah Vogel: Then the other pot of money is the guaranteed lending. Could you give the rough idea of how much is direct and how much is through the guaranteed pipeline? Which is why you get applause for making these changes.

Connie Holman: Okay. We will do that. I'll make sure the next report includes that information as well.

Sarah Vogel: To break down again, it's a tiny fraction of the money that goes out into lending and agriculture with FmHA. Excuse me, I'm dating myself. FSA help, the tiny fraction is direct. The big bucks, the big bucks are in the world of guaranteed which really hurts Native Americans because of the paucity of lenders willing to lend on reservations.

Connie Holman: Just strictly from the limitations. We're limited to \$300,000 indirect. Our Guaranteed Loan Program is limited to \$1.399 million. From the dollar standpoint, it is a huge difference.

Sarah Vogel: And it so much reduces the risk for a private lender that is nervous because they haven't lent on a reservation before. They haven't lent to Native Americans before, to have a 90 percent guarantee from the Feds takes away so much of the risk and gives them a much bigger sense of comfort that this guaranteed program I think is a big deal, a big deal. Thank you.

Connie Holman: Thank you.

Angela Peter: This is Angela from Alaska. I could actually relate to this because they don't give loans too much in rural Alaska because there ain't no way for them to default it or whatever you call it. So, yeah.

Connie Holman: The marketing is somewhat limited in that particular area.

Sarah Vogel: I think I saw Gilbert stand up.

Connie Holman: Yes. I'm sorry?

Gilbert Louis: No, no. I'm just listening to everybody.

Connie Holman: One more thing quickly. What we're really excited about is the Highly Fractionated Indian Land Loan Program that was authorized in the 2008 Farm Bill. I can truly say, because I've been with it all the way, this is a case where we went out and did our tribal consultations and I had this thing all written in 2008. I knew exactly what was going to make it work. It was going to be perfect. I went out and did the 14 face-to-face stations of travel consultation and suddenly found out everything I had envisioned would not work. By the third one of the country women across, somebody said why don't you make an intermediary loan program. After a while we determined that it wasn't going to work the way it was written and tied to BIA, so we did go back. They made some changes in the 2014 Farm Bill and we did make it an intermediary loan program.

We did additional tribal consultations with Leslie's help. We did one here last year. It became effective in December of 2015 and we actually obligated \$10 million like the 29th day of September of 2015, right in the nick of time before we lost our

money. That went to a Native CDFI in Montana. Leslie, can you help me with the name?

Male Voice: [Inaudible]

Leslie Wheelock: There you go.

Connie Holman: There you go. There you are, by the way. Yeah. He was presenting his -- say that again.

Male Voice: It's the Native American Community Development Corporation. It's the corporation that was founded by Elouise Cobell.

Connie Holman: There you go. So the idea is that we have not closed that. We have not closed that loan yet. In addition, we were saved \$10 million each year since 2008. Last year was the first year we were able to use that. In addition to that, here at this very conference that we had, we delivered an additional loan application packet. Through our work with another organization, we anticipated receiving an application before the end of December 4. This year it's \$10 million. So we anticipate being able to make that loan probably sometime in early spring of next year. It has been a very successful program now that we've finally got it off the match.

Josiah Griffin: This is Josiah. The time is now 2:00, which starts our public comment period.

Leslie Wheelock: Thank you, Connie.

Josiah Griffin: Thank you so much, Connie. So to the extent that we don't have public comments at this time, then we are able to continue conversations. But we do have a few folks that have already signed up for the queue. So respectfully, Roxie, if you'd like to provide a few words if you're still interested?

Leslie Wheelock: Hi, welcome. Would you please state your full name and organization or tribe you are affiliated with? Thank you.

Roxie June: Yes. My name is Roxie June. I work with the Navajo Nation Department of Agriculture. I had asked the question - the public comments are to this group on suggestions, who you work? Or I was kind of unclear on what the public comment was about.

Leslie Wheelock: This is the time that this council allots to any individual that wants to come in and bring a problem, concern, issue, question, accolade to the council concerning USDA and its programs and tribes or tribal individuals.

Roxie June: Okay. Thank you. So the concern I had was about dryland farming. From what I understand, it is covered under the USDA but you have to be creative about it. With climate change and with challenges regarding agriculture infrastructure on the Navajo Nation, I think it should be a lot easier for people on the Navajo Nation to be able to do dryland

farming. Also another thing is a lot of things that would help farmers be successful in agriculture aren't necessarily covered by agriculture.

For instance, transportation. If you have a farmer that say in Shiprock or Chinley or they're in a really urban area and they're doing dryland farming, they would have challenges bringing their product to the market. I think on the Navajo Nation we basically just have roads and our bus system isn't too elaborate. But if we have more of a centralized transportation, then I, as a consumer, say on a weekend if I wanted to go to certain areas of the reservation where they have more water, where they grow more the traditional crops, say I could go to Shiprock in the morning and get corn and kneel down bread and then travel to Chinley and get another product that they're famous for and then on to loop and then come back home in the evening.

As a consumer, I would have to get in my car and drive to all those places. I don't know if I would be able to do it within a day, but it would be very costly. It would also take a lot of my time. There would be a lot of wear and tear because the roads aren't always that good. So if there's a way for the farmers to be able to grow their crop, produce the food, and be able to offer it to the consumer and make it easier for them sort of -- to almost treat the reservation as a big city and

travel from place to place. I know centralized transportation is likely not covered under the USDA, but at some point we're going to have to be creative in order to get those products from the farmers. It's going to take probably a multiyear timeline and it's going to take more organizations than just the USDA to do that.

And then also when you talk about the USDA, I think there was some mention of setting targets, that they should maybe reach a certain percentage of participation. But a lot of times an organization can use numbers to their advantage and not really achieve what their intent was. So it seems like we should start with the tribes - what are the tribe's goals, and how can the USDA and other federal organizations meet those goals.

A lot of times it's not just going to be the USDA. It's going to be another organization that might be able to help a tribe's particular goals. For instance conservation or water development, or increasing dryland farming, or whatever the goal might be. Especially with climate change coming in and increased drought, I think water is just going to be a huge issue. So I'm trying to think of ways that we can start to capture and hold water as opposed to looking at commercial farming. I think our history has always been small farmers, small farming, feeding the community type things. I think that

sometimes that gets lost so people start talking about commercial farming. That's it. Thank you.

Leslie Wheelock: Thank you. Any questions or comments to address to? I'm sorry. I didn't get your name.

Josiah Griffin: Roxie.

Leslie Wheelock: I know Roxie, but --

Roxie June: Roxie June with the Navajo Nation Department of Agriculture.

Leslie Wheelock: Thank you.

Erin Parker: I have a comment.

Leslie Wheelock: Erin.

Erin Parker: First of all, Roxie, thank you for your comment. I just wanted to say that I really appreciate especially your comments about transportation. I know how big the Navajo Nation is. On the Navajo Nation I have one of my favorite examples of cracking the nut, of getting fresh food to people in such a large area. That Tri-Community Mobile Farmers Market, I think [indiscernible]. It is run by a several different families on the Navajo Nation. I think they only serve three chapters right now, but they actually travel around and do exactly what you're talking about. I don't think they currently receive USDA funding to do that, however. So I think that comment is very well taken. Thank you for it.

Leslie Wheelock: In other parts of the United States, I'm thinking of [indiscernible], New Mexico, the smaller farmers have gotten together and created essentially a co-op without going through all of the legality of a co-op. But they pooled their resources. They pooled their transportation. They've collectively acquired a commercial cooling unit to keep food fresh so that they could have a farmer's market. That happens around the United States where you have usually family-owned operations that don't produce enough to actually sell it to a commercial organization, or a grocery, or a place like that.

They'll pool their products and sell them that way. That usually takes somebody managing the process. That's really typically the person that would collect the information, work with the producers in order to ensure that they can certify certain things that have to be certified depending on where they're selling and what they're selling. But primarily it's responsible for the movement of the food and ensuring that food is where it's supposed to be at a time when that person is also responsible for marketing that the food is available. Some would call it a farmer's market, but it can be called a lot of different names.

Tawney Brunsch: Leslie.

Leslie Wheelock: Yes, Tawney.

Tawney Brunsch: Is there still FMPP funding available for that, the Farmer's Market Promotional Program?

Leslie Wheelock: Yes, there is. There is, absolutely.

Tawney Brunsch: I think that's what Lakota Funds has, utilized. Lakota Funds is a Native CDFI in the Pine Ridge Reservation and we've applied for -- so we're a 501(c)3 and receive FMPP funding to do just that basically. We work with individual farmers to encourage them to plant a little more whatever and then gather them together, encourage them to form a co-op and then we provided the transport. We went around and gathered their produce for them and got it to the farmer's market. We also were able to offer -- it was EBT. We got an EBT machine actually. So we could take EBT and/or SNAP benefits to pay for that fresh produce. So you should contact if there's any local nonprofit there that might be able to utilize that program to help.

Roxie June: All right. Thank you.

Leslie Wheelock: Sarah.

Sarah Vogel: This is a question sort of for Leslie. One of the ideas that you suggested, I think, would be to see from the tribe what their particular mission is. Maybe it's water development, thinking that we need the water before we get to the loans and so forth. To what degree does the OTR have the capacity to seek that kind of information from tribes? Not

every tribe is interested in agriculture. But for those who are interested in agriculture, who maybe have people like you who do that, does the OTR have a way of gathering up the wish list of the tribes? The services that they wish they had?

Leslie Wheelock: Typically when a tribe comes into the Office of Tribal Relations, we got their state USDA teams on the phone and as well as our federal team of partners and talk through those desires. Tribes do not hesitate to bring a laundry list into our office and say this is what we're looking for, this is what we would like to do. I know r had her hand Roselynn has her hands up, but I wanted to make sure of that she had --

Sarah Vogel: That's not exactly what I was thinking of. It's more like do you have a way of reaching out like to NCAI or something like that and say, hey folks, we'd love to hear from you, so that you have a way of determining what it is that the interests are.

Leslie Wheelock: Oh. We do it all the time. But our Natural Resources Conservation Service, FSA, and RD typically have local meetings that are put together in order to educate not only the people in the room but also the people from the USDA.

Sarah Vogel: Yeah. And there's a way of getting that to the people like Connie.

Leslie Wheelock: It doesn't necessarily come to the Office of Tribal Relations if it's being handled okay on the ground. We will often hear about it if it's not being handled okay on the ground. We rely very heavily on our agency folks to work with those communities.

Sarah Vogel: I think, too. Obviously I see it's a tremendous avenue for that kind of input. Thank you.

Leslie Wheelock: Roselynn?

Roselynn Yazzie: Yes, this is Roselynn. You just took the words out of my mouth when you said FSA and NRCS. They do have funds. I know because we just received a program. We got awarded a program on some rehab, repair work on some old irrigation system. So there are programs with FSA and NRCS programs in the area. The person to see is Chambliss Lantana [phonetic]. There was some range, some fencing program also that was available. He's been very helpful to us on those programs. So if you need any help, I'm in the neighborhood.

Roxie June: Well, as I said before, I would like to see from your organization if you can make it easier to get money for dryland farming. Yes, there's money out there. But you have to be creative. So if that's something you could look into, that would be great. Thank you.

Leslie Wheelock: Thank you.

Josiah Griffin: The next person we have on our list is - and I apologize if I mispronounce your last name - Diana Doan-Crider. If you wouldn't mind saying your title and organization.

Diana Doan-Crider: I will. I'm Diana Doan-Crider. I'm representing today the Society for Range Management, but I'm also partnering with IAC. I just wanted to tell you about a project that we have and also just kind of promote it a little bit as a model. During the course of this project we'll be ironing some wrinkles out, which I'm sure you all know that there are a lot of wrinkles in every year working on a project like this.

Anyway, actually Mark had a lot to do with this project when we first started. At the Society for Range Management, a number of years ago we were brought in to start an initiative with the tribes. At that point we named it the Native American Rangeland Advisory Council. We talked about things that we could do in Indian country and what was going on in Indian country. Finally James McHugh [phonetic], and those of you who know him, finally just said I have enough of this. I want to quit talking about the problem, and we want to fix this.

So we came up with the project. It's called the Native American Rangeland Training Initiative. Basically we surveyed our members who were all tribal members at that time, there are

about 100, and we asked them what do you need from professional organizations? What do you need in the area of range management? Their answer was we need capacity building and training for our own tribal governments.

Since that time, the BIA has also joined in on this effort. We are working closely with Dave Bennington [phonetic] and his BIA Range staff. The program comprises four components. Also I have to give a cheer for the former DUS Butch Blazer, who really pushed this project through, and he's still working very closely with us on this project.

The first component which I feel is probably one of the most important is a series of workshops that we will take to three regions - the Central Plains, Northwest, and the Southwest. There will be at this point a one-week-long workshop to train tribal natural resource managers in the area of rangeland management. Many of you may know that range management is highly specialized. If somebody has a four-year degree or a master's degree in range, it can almost over qualify you for positions within the tribes although some of the tribes do occupy range managers. I know the BIA also hires range managers.

However, a lot of the natural resource managers in tribal governments kind of wear a lot of different hats. They're managing water. They're managing range. They're managing

wildlife. They're managing invasive weeds. So we decided with this workshop model to adapt it to their needs and also to incorporate tribal and culturally relevant approaches.

So right now we're putting together our Curriculum Committee which will be comprised not just of rangeland specialists that are working in federal agencies or academics, but we're putting together a unique combination of people that we feel can help develop the curriculum needed by the tribes. We will have a lot of tribal input to this.

Where we're going to go with this, we don't know in terms of support. Right now we have received funding from the NRCS and we are waiting on signatures from the U.S. Forest Service. However, we really feel like this model could work in the long term and could really service the tribes in terms of helping them to build capacity. So we'll keep you informed. I told Leslie that I would send on the proposal that we had for this.

Built onto that is also the incorporation of a model that includes tribal students. If you probably know our tribal colleges, very few tribal colleges offer courses in rangeland management. So we're trying to figure out how can we develop range classes that matter to tribal students and then also looking at bridge programs for bridging those students to larger land grants that do offer those programs, which is fine and dandy. However, most of those programs and larger land grants

do not deal with tribal issues at all. So we're also having to work with our larger land grants in terms of how those programs can be developed.

The second component is a series of outreach tools that tribal managers can use for their own communities. So we actually had a session this summer at Salish Kootenai College where we had input from about 50 different groups - including tribes, tribal colleges, larger land grants. We had NRCS. Forest Service was there. We had a lot of different kinds of people telling us what they would like to see in terms of outreach tools for the tribes. Versus just the typical pamphlet that we get from our federal agencies, we are adapting a set of outreach tools that are tribally adapted.

We even use Indian humor in many cases or film clips and things that are adapted to some of the issues that the tribes themselves deal with. Because we actually compared some YouTube videos of an agency recruiting video which had 52 views over four years versus a native comedy YouTube and had over a million hits in less than a year. So we're actually looking at some creative ways to reach out to communities and so forth and do some storytelling. We'll be working closely with students and some of our film institutes to do that as well.

The third outreach tool is a website. This was the request from the tribes, that they had a comprehensive website with all

things range management on this website. A lot of times we get requests for PowerPoint presentations or educational programs for incoming tribal councils. How do we create a tool for tribes to be able to download and adapt to their own needs? That information needs to be out there. A lot of tribal councils don't want to spend 20 days learning about range management. We only have a little bit of time to talk to them. So we're going to be providing information like that on the website. We're going to have a whole section for students that might be interested in going into range management, projects that work, funding sources, partnerships and that sort of thing.

The fourth component is -- and for some reason it just totally slipped my mind. So we've got the workshops. We've got the website. We've got the --

Sarah Vogel: Humor.

Diana Doan-Crider: Pardon me?

Sarah Vogel: Humor you said.

Diana Doan-Crider: Yeah. Well, but that was part of our outreach tools. There's a fourth component and it just totally slipped my mind. But anyway, nonetheless, we feel like it's a really good package but it's only a start. One of the things that I think - this is my little opinion here, I've had a lot of discussion with people and we've had a lot of brainstorming sessions - is the need to, number one, transfer information from

elders and also from more experienced range managers that are now retiring and leaving the whole system. We're kind of reinventing the wheel. We need to figure out ways to put those people into the process and allow those people to transfer that information to our younger people.

It's also happening in the agencies. I had a discussion with somebody in one of our natural resource management agencies. There's a huge gap between the younger people and the older people, and the younger people are no longer getting mentored. So we want to bring that into the picture. Actually part of our budget includes contracting for retired rangeland specialists to get them to help us actually teach the courses and so forth.

Oh, I know what the fourth one was. It's really important. The fourth one is an online range class and an online soils class that will be combined with the field component, a two-week field component where we're going to hire retired range folks to come out and actually spend time with the students. At this point, this is the discussion that we had in July. We met with Salish Kootenai College and other tribal colleges were there. That the courses would be hosted at one tribal college, but that all tribal college students could take those classes. Each respective tribal college would receive the credits for those students and the tuition for those students, but it would be

managed on a centralized server. We're going to support the funding necessary for that, including who's going to teach the class, and then set-up the field component.

So what we'd really like to see in the future is how these programs can be used as a model to maintain consistency and long-term continuation of these types of programs versus trying to bring hundreds and hundreds of students to certain locations like at our professional conferences. It would be really great if we could create the specialist teams that have developed the curriculum appropriate for these tribes, that they can travel. Not just teach the students, but also continue to mentor and continue to provide input so that students not only can get jobs but that they can also create their own businesses on tribal lands and have that resource to go back to and say I need help with this.

The models also need to be all inclusive. They need to include financial literacy, all the way to business management plans, all the way to what happens if my cattle gets sick, all the way to what happens if we had a huge flood and it washed out half of my riverbed - those kinds of things that need to be in place over the long term and consistently. I think that wraps it up with a nice little bow on the package. If you have any questions, I'd be glad to entertain them. Or comments.

Leslie Wheelock: Questions? Comments?

Sarah Vogel: It's wonderful.

Diana Doan-Crider: Well, tell me that after we're done. We haven't started yet. We'll be starting this year. Yeah, I'm pretty nervous about it. But it's a great concept, so we're all really walking very carefully. Anyway, here we go. We'll keep you apprised of the success. But I've done scarier things in my life. I'm actually a bear biologist. I did bear studies in Northern Mexico, which is where my people are from. I was the first woman to ever do that, so I figured that's kind of scary. I'm kind of used to scary things so I'll probably -- although I'm a little bit older now. [Cross-talking] Pardon me?

Female Voice: I said quite a comparison.

Diana Doan-Crider: Yeah. And I'm 55. Back then I was 20. So now it's even scarier. But anyway, okay. Well, I think that's it. If you need anything, Leslie will try to get a hold of me. Mark knows how to get a hold of me. So thank you very much for your service as well.

Sarah Vogel: I think there's going to be or there is an email list of members on the council. Maybe you want to get not on the day-to-day but here and there. I'm saying keep us informed because it sounds like a superb method that possibly things like irrigation systems, or the dryland farming approach, or marketing, et cetera, et cetera, could build on your process.

Diana Doan-Crider: Right. Yeah. And I think we learned this from another group of people that I work with. We were spending an awful lot of money trying to bring everybody to our location and we realized we need to just develop these expert teams that go around and travel. Doing it with contract money is a great way to do that because a lot of the folks that we're looking at, they're retired. They have their benefits package. They're okay with that. They don't want to go back to work, but they're okay with contracting. That's a lot less of a heavier burden on the project versus paying fulltime salaries and that sort of thing. So if we can somehow get into the system where it's long term and we're funded with some stability, I think it really, really could work and provide models for other topics.

Leslie Wheelock: So this is Leslie from USDA. One of the things that Mark from NRCS raised earlier was the need to get more students into the NRCS pipeline. Our tribal colleges a couple of years ago mentioned to us that they can get their students through a number of courses. But the hands-on soil science course is the one that most of the colleges do not offer. It's the one course that a lot of our tribal people are lacking in order to help out with the NRCS roles. So that's great.

Diana Doan-Crider: And that was their input. They said we really need to get students in here. We actually have conducted

a huge disconnect study that we're still working on and disconnects from minorities. We had about 133 disconnects. We're recruiting them into the federal workforce. We're working on another disconnect project with just identifying challenges with tribal students, federal, and the community issues. That's over 300 lines long, but we are consolidating it in two papers for the secretaries. We'll see how far that goes. But regardless, we're going to keep our head into the wind and we get this work done despite what happens around the corner.

Leslie Wheelock: Mark.

Mark Wadsworth: Mark Wadsworth. Diana, like they say, kudos. Great job. I went to my first SRM Meeting and I think that was quite a number of years ago.

Diana Doan-Crider: Billings, I think.

Mark Wadsworth: Yeah, I think. Then from that effort, yeah, you got on board. The Native American people worked with this closely. They started the whole thing from scratch. Where you are today, it's fantastic. She deserves a lot of good accolades.

Diana Doan-Crider: Oh, thank you. I appreciate it.

Mark Wadsworth: Congratulations on what you've done so far.

Diana Doan-Crider: Thanks. It's been a very rewarding and fulfilling opportunity to do that. Somebody told me once I was

like a brain herbologist [sounds like]. Point me in the right direction and get out of the way. I am a worker and I want to know how to fix things, not just talk about them. But you'll have to hold me to the task to make sure that we get this done.

Mark Wadsworth: The next SRM Meeting is at George --

Diana Doan-Crider: Thank you for bringing that up. Our next SRM meeting is at the end of January/beginning of February in St. George. We invite you to that. We actually have started recruiting our native students to that organization and, hence, we're kind of tied into our partnership here with Ross at the IAC. We don't have a huge group, but we have a pretty strong cohesive group. Crow College, Little Big Horn College is the first one to actually establish a first official range club. They are only a two-year college, but they're teaching a range class there now.

We're trying to encourage professional organizations like SRM and The Wildlife Society and so forth to quit just focusing on the larger four-year universities to recruit. We need them at the tribal colleges and we need them at the community colleges because there are a lot of students there who are unaware of the opportunities to bridge and to get into these professions. Unfortunately we're very wildlife talk heavy right now in natural resources because everybody watches Animal

Planet. Seriously that's why, and the students dictate what classes we teach at the universities.

Nobody is going into soils. Nobody is going into forestry, range, hydrology - those types of mission critical positions. So that's where we're really trying to emphasize and show the students, look, if you're not taking care of the soil, you're not going to have you know everything else that lives on it. So we're working really hard to put an emphasis there, and we'll do the same thing with tribal colleges because we feel like that's where the opportunities are.

Mark Wadsworth: So you will be having a tribal component to the SRM Meeting?

Diana Doan-Crider: Yeah. Actually it's well-established now and we'd like for you all to come. So if you need any more information, just let me know and I'll get it to you.

Leslie Wheelock: Great. Thank you.

Diana Doan-Crider: Thank you for your service.

Josiah Griffin: [Off-mic] The next person that we have, one of our council members has requested that a colleague of Ms. Holland [phonetic], so Mr. Howard Edmondson [phonetic], I would like to turn the mic over to you. Mr. Edmondson is calling over the phone so we're going to have to use [indiscernible]. But Mr. Edmondson, if you wouldn't mind relaying your title, organization and tribal affiliation.

Howard Edmondson: I didn't hear what you said.

Josiah Griffin: Okay. So the mic is yours. I don't know how all this will sound over the speaker system. If you wouldn't mind relaying your title, the organization and tribal affiliation that you have.

Howard Edmondson: Okay. My name is [indiscernible
3:37:23-3:42:22]

Mr. Edmondson: [Inaudible]

Josiah Griffin: Mr. Edmondson [phonetic], can you hear me?

Mr. Edmondson: Yes.

Josiah Griffin: On our council we have Connie Holman from the Farm Service Agency. She has your name and number from Jerry McPeak. She would be more than happy to touch base with you to walk through where there are concerns and situations.

Connie Holman: Mr. Edmondson, this is Connie Holman. I have your name and information and I'll take that back to Washington, D.C. I'll have someone on our staff reach out to you early part of next week.

Mr. Edmondson: I can't hear. I'm sorry.

Josiah Griffin: Mr. Edmondson, Connie said that she has your name and information and that she will take that back to Washington and get back to you sometime next week.

Mr. Edmondson: Okay. I surely appreciate it.

Josiah Griffin: Are there any further comments? Thank you for your comments, Mr. Edmondson. Enjoy the rest of your day. I know that, like I said, Connie will be in touch with you within the week.

Mr. Edmondson: Okay. I appreciate it.

Josiah Griffin: Thank you, sir. This is Josiah. The next person that we have for public comment is Loren Birdrattler. So Mr. Birdrattler, if you'd like to come on up.

Loren Birdrattler: First of all, thank you for having the listening session. I think that it's very vital for us to ensure that we're hearing feedback from people at the implementation level, especially when it comes to barriers to access to USDA programs. Thank you for offering the opportunity.

My name is Loren Birdrattler. I'm the agricultural resource management plan project manager for the Blackfeet tribe. That's one of my hats. I also serve as a consultant to Native American Community Development Corporation, who was recently awarded as the intermediary lender for the Highly Fractionated Indian Loan Program under USDA. Under that program, we've developed the Piikani Money Campaign, which Leslie alluded to earlier. We did do an overview of that campaign through the National Congress of American Indians. You can find that webinar on their website for additional

information about the Piikani Money Campaign. I did joke this morning about wearing several different hats. The only hat that I don't have here unfortunately is my cowboy hat. Perhaps the next time I'll remember to bring that.

Montana was one of four states this year along with Florida, Missouri, and Ohio that was added to the USDA StrikeForce Initiative. These are recommendations from the Blackfeet tribe to the Council for Native American Farming and Ranching on the recommendations that came out of the public meeting that both the USDA and the Blackfeet tribe hosted on September 27th in Browning, Montana to identify and come up with some solutions for barriers to access and barriers to substantiation under the USDA StrikeForce Initiative for native producers and tribes alike. The Council for the Native American Farming and Ranching is one of several approaches that the Blackfeet tribe will pursue as a delivery mechanism for the USDA on the recommendations from the Blackfeet tribe to the USDA.

Other approaches that are being considered for these recommendations are taking place at the local level, state and regional level, as well as the national level through the Montana Congressional delegation, as well as the Office of Tribal Relations at USDA. The Blackfeet tribe is pursuing several approaches because we recognize that the recommendations cannot effect change on any one single level primarily because

some of the changes require statutory and regulatory overhauls to current legislation and/or regulations. So most of the recommendations were borne out of a public meeting that was hosted by the tribe and USDA on September 27th of this year at the tribal headquarters in the Blackfeet capital of Browning, Montana. During this meeting U.S. government personnel from the local, state, and regional level sat down with Blackfeet government program people and Blackfeet producers to explore barriers to access and substantiation to USDA programs by Blackfeet producers, as well as Blackfeet tribal government program people.

To understand and give context to the recommendations being made, one must first understand the challenges that exist to access and once you gain access to substantiation under USDA. Challenges to access. USDA programs can then be positioned to substantiate need and the correlating recommendations to remedy those challenges are as follows. The first challenge that we've identified was language in the United States Farm Bill. I know that this isn't something that the council can approach since you mostly make recommendations to the Secretary of Agriculture but it's worth mentioning.

Most of the language in the U.S. Farm Bill does not take into consideration the jurisdictional complexities that exist on Indian trust land resulting in program formulation that

prohibits participation by tribal producers and tribal government programs. One of the recommendations that we have is language that recognizes these jurisdictional complexities to managing Indian trust land that eases requirements for eligibility to those programs.

The next challenge that we defined was the program parameters under most USDA programs do not take into consideration that same challenge, the complexities that exist on Indian trust lands, resulting in an automatic disqualification of Blackfeet farmers and ranchers, as well as Blackfeet agriculture programs from participating in USDA programs. One of the recommendations that we made was statutory and regulatory changes that must match the complexities for trust land management that will ease eligibility requirements.

The next challenge we identified was that USDA personnel aren't vested in native communities. Unfortunately, USDA personnel are not vested in Blackfeet communities when given the choice since most are non-native. Personnel choose to be based in the border town of Cut Bank and honeymoon in the Blackfeet capital for only two or three days out of the week. Because of this, they do not ever become fully vested in the community and do not ever put themselves in an advantageous position to adequately advocate for practical solutions on challenges to programmatic access. This also results in the lack of trust

being established with local producers that would lead to more participation in USDA programs.

During the public meeting, a USDA employee based in the state capital of Helena exclaimed, for us to come to you, you have to make it worth our time. That statement underscores the approach of agency personnel that are not vested in our community. During a breakout session at the Intertribal Agriculture Council's membership meeting here in Las Vegas, a non-native national programmatic coordinator, when asked how many Indians are participating in your grant program, he had no idea - this coming from a national Native American program coordinator. That's egregious in my mind. You're coming to an Indian conference. Any time that I ever prepared for any conference that I was going to, I ensure that I understood my audience. And so that's egregious in my mind.

Some of the recommendations that we've made is a full service USDA station in Blackfeet country. Currently, there are efforts and an official request from USDA FSA state program manager Bruce Nelson to receive additional FTEs to place at native tribal headquarters. The Blackfeet tribe would like the Council of Native American Farmers and Ranchers to support this effort for those additional FTEs. A second recommendation is to give Indian preference to those FTEs that directly have functions that service Native Americans and tribes, similar to

Indian preference under the United States Department of Health and Human Services and the United States Department of Interior. OPM has already put out guidelines on how you establish Indian preference within your programs. I don't think that it's a far reach for the USDA to take that under consideration and perhaps offer Indian preference for those functions that directly deal with Native American farmers and ranchers and that manage those programs. I think that that would be a possible remedy to the lack of investment in native communities, if you will, from a human resource perspective.

The next challenge that we recognized was the USDA program silos. Many programs under the USDA umbrella do not communicate very well with each other, nor do they adequately share information with each other. They present to native producers and expect native producers to absorb the reams of information they distribute via their handouts regarding the overview of programs, eligibility requirements, and the benefits of USDA programs with very little coordination between those USDA programs to group programs and benefits or simplify access to these programs. I would like to commend the Office of Tribal Relations for developing a primer that actually defines all of the Indian programs under USDA. I think that that's a huge start to that lack of communication or the understanding.

One of the recommendations that I think was developed from the USDA StrikeForce Initiative meeting that we held was the possibility of having an interface. When we think about all of these different programs under the umbrella of USDA presenting to producers, then you can sit there for four days and still not hear an overview from every USDA program. The burden for the absorption of the information, how you navigate the process to gain access to those programs is placed on native producers. I think that we should turn that around and place that burden on USDA personnel by having an access point or an interface that says this is what I'm trying to do, this, this, and this. The interface says, okay, well, these are the USDA programs that you're eligible for. Here, here, and here. You're not eligible for these other 192, so you don't have to sit there for those four days and listen to the program requirements for those other 192 programs.

The second would be those programs under the USDA umbrella whose primary function is to substantiate need. Like the Agricultural Research Service, National Agricultural Statistical Service, and the Animal and Plant Inspection Service, among others, begin to work together to develop strategies that assist tribes and tribal producers in substantiating their needs. Once you overcome the barriers to access to the USDA programs, there has to be coordinated efforts in place so that we can

substantiate our need. As native programmers, we all know the frustration that it is. Certainly as grant writers, as program people, we understand the frustration that it takes to substantiate need.

You have the U.S. Census who primarily collects data that's based on counties and not on reservations. And so to actually extrapolate Indian data out of these larger national databases is problematic at best. Now, NASA's done a tremendous job in getting native producers counted. That's huge. We're very grateful for those efforts that NASA's done. But I think that there can be much more coordination under the USDA umbrella with organizations working together to develop those strategies that allow us to substantiate our need.

The next challenge that we've found was that access to research and science-based information is slim at best. There is not one USDA Agricultural Research Service station in Indian country despite Indian country - and to a further extent Blackfeet country - being underserved communities in the United States, some of the most underserved communities that you could think of that exist. And so when we think about the coordination of those programs at the umbrella level, I think that it's very important that they develop those strategies. One of the recommendations that we have is of course to have the first research station in Blackfeet country.

The next recommendation would be a mandate to require current USDA research stations to begin partnering with tribes and tribal colleges to conduct more agriculture-based research in Indian country.

The next challenge that we defined was the matching requirements under many USDA programs, specifically Rural Development. This matching requirement is not reasonable for most Native American farmers and ranchers and tribes, and then barely disqualifies them for participating in most USDA programs that have a matching requirement.

One of the more egregious ones I think under Rural Development is the funding of rural telephone co-ops to develop broadband in Indian country. Those funds are being tied up by these telephone co-ops that are mostly non-native in nature, so they make the development of that infrastructure in Indian country their last priority, despite the fact that we're their largest base of customers.

So when you think about the disbursement of Rural Development funds and those rural co-ops tying them up, when you have tribal enterprises that are trying to expand access to broadband Internet, their only option is to build over the current infrastructure and do that on their own and fund that on their own because of the tying up of funds that were already dispersed to rural telephone co-ops. That's egregious.

There has to be some sort of mechanism that if non-native entities are going to attain funds based on a native population count that they need to actually spend that money in Indian country and develop that infrastructure and not make them the last priority. When you go back to those wonderful folks from USDA standing up and telling us all about their wonderful programs, the first thing they say is you can get more information on our website. Well, if we don't have broadband, we certainly can't access your websites. That certainly is problematic at best.

The first recommendation of that is the USDA secretary to waive the matching requirement for the tribal producers and tribal programs, especially those in underserved communities. The second recommendation would be the U.S. Farm Bill have similar language inserted that waives tribal producers and tribal programs from the match requirement. The third one under that would be expansion of the language that defines in-kind matches.

The next challenge that we defined was adequate training of USDA employees to the challenges that are created by the jurisdictional complexities that exist on Indian trust lands. Now, we all know from personal experience that that's a very difficult issue at best. One of the directives that I received from my tribe, when I first started working there in June, was

to put together a noxious weeds program. The first thing in my mind that I needed to do was pull together all of the stakeholders. It was that effort that really opened my eyes to the number of jurisdictions that operate on reservations. We pulled together all of the stakeholders.

Under the United States government, there was the Department of Interior, which has the National Park Service. We border the Glacier National Park in the west. There was the Bureau of Reclamation who oversees the management of some of our waterways, the Bureau of Land Management, as well as the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Under the Bureau of Indian Affairs, there's range, irrigation, and roads. That's just the Department of Interior.

Under the U.S. Department of Agriculture, there are a myriad of programs that are operating on reservations when you think about stakeholders and noxious weeds. The state of Montana, the state highway right-of-ways, the state highways, the Glacier County, both their extension service, their conservation district, as well as their county roads for both Glacier and Pondera County. Under the tribal umbrella, there were 12 different programs that deal with noxious weeds, and then of course, Burlington Northern. That one's right through the gut of the Blackfeet reservation.

When you think about just trying to manage your weeds, understanding those jurisdictional complexities is difficult at best. However, if your charge is to deliver services then you should be the first one that understands those jurisdictional complexities that exist when it comes to management of Indian lands. Many USDA employees just do not. They just do not understand those complexities. As a result, the access to USDA programs suffers. It also goes hand-in-hand with being vested in Indian communities.

The recommendations under that challenge that we defined were for USDA to develop a curriculum for training USDA employees on the history that created those complexities, the current federal statutes that govern Indian trust land management, and any other applicable materials that would aid USDA employees in the possible solutions and define the barriers of access to USDA programs. The second recommendation would be to require - require - those USDA employees to take that training, especially those that directly service native producers and Indian tribes, and for them to be trained by the Intertribal Agricultural Council or another national stakeholder that actually understand those complexities.

Finally, the last challenge that we identified was inadequate funding levels for the FRTEP program. With the proposed expansion of the FRTEP program to historically black

and tribal colleges and universities without additional funding further fractionates the few resources that exist under the program, as well as setting up a breeding ground for programmatic duplication. Also, colleges and universities have access to pools of funding that FRTEP programs are prohibited from accessing. So you're asking them to split up their pool of resources with some that has already access to USDA programs. The recommendations would be additional funding for the program to proportionately add money to the program to expand under its current structure.

And I do apologize, I didn't realize that you all were meeting here during the IAC, otherwise, I would have brought my StrikeForce notes from that meeting but these were the things that we were able to pool together off the top of our heads over lunch today. And so, we will be making a formal recommendation later on this week or next week. So, I certainly thank you for allowing us a forum to voice our concerns. Do you have any questions?

Leslie Wheelock: Go ahead. Erin?

Erin Parker: This is Erin. Hi, thank you so much for the very comprehensive set of recommendations. I really appreciate that especially over lunch, I've done that before myself and I know it's a challenge. These are wonderful. I don't know - I have so many questions, just a couple of thoughts. I know you

said up in the very beginning that this is just one forum where you will be speaking about these recommendations. I'm sure that you're already going to do this but I just wanted to state for the record, especially with things like the challenges, the language in the Farm Bill, anything else that requires any kind of congressional legislative fix, that I would encourage you to contact Colby Duren at the National Congress of American Indians. He's the staff attorney who works on the Farm Bill issues and work closely with NCAI on these things to try to get some of these changes made in the next Farm Bill because that work is already beginning for sure. So, that's a very timely recommendation that you've brought to us, certainly.

There are a couple of other things in here, especially I'm thinking about hiring more native folks for these programs. It's something that I think about a lot and something I think is really important. One of the things that keeps popping up on my life recently is the need for change in the personnel descriptions at USDA and it's a long ask. Sometimes, it takes a lot to work that through a system but you've made several points that continue to highlight the need for that for me. So I really appreciate you bringing that to the table.

And my last point, I guess I wanted to say, and this goes back to the need to keep talking to NCAI and working with Congress on the other side of these things is that there is a

\$2.8 million increase requested for FRTEP in the 2017 budget and it's not currently. I think that we know. We talked about it earlier this morning, not in neither the House nor the Senate bill. So, that's another thing to be pushing for because I completely agree with you about the funding level and the points that you made. So, thank you so much.

Loren Birdrattler: You're welcome. Thank you for listening. Any other comments or questions?

Sarah Vogel: It's excellent.

Loren Birdrattler: Thank you and thank you for your service.

Leslie Wheelock: Thank you Mr. Birdrattler.

Josiah Griffin: So, the next person that we have on our list is Karen Linnell. Would you mind stepping to the microphone, please?

Karen Linnell: Good afternoon. I'm Karen Linnell. I'm from the Cheesh'na tribe. I am the executive director for the Intertribal Resource Commission, also known as CRITR. We have a much longer name for our tribal conservation district. We were the recipient of a USDA CIG grant in 2014. We're just into our final year in that three-year grant. We received the largest grant that was non-institutional, not a university, not another agency.

One of the things that - and I talked to Mr. Rose about this a little bit today - is to look at ways for the match -- that 50 percent match requirement is pretty hefty and that's probably why you have institutions and agencies applying for it. But being a small organization, we were able to come together and create these partnerships with state and federal agencies to meet that match requirement for our project. We're building a comprehensive GIS system that is pretty groundbreaking where we've taken in data from all kinds of platforms and got it into one system. We'll be sharing that information with the state and with our federal partners as well. We've also created a partnership, a working group from this and are working toward expanding.

With our GIS system, we've done vegetation analysis and completed one tribe's section out of the eight tribal members that we have. This year, we're going to be expanding that to all eight of our tribes. We're also looking at expanding and doing it across the entire landscape of our traditional territory, which is our boundaries for our tribal conservation district. So we're working with our partners, the state, and the federal agencies that are on that land to do that. Because of our interest in our development in this, our USDA soils group has committed to do several million dollars' worth of soil

studies on the lands over the next several years so that we can then again improve the data that's in our GIS system.

What I'm here today is to just say thank you. I wanted to publicly thank Leslie and the rest of you folks for your support in our efforts in getting management on wildlife resources in Alaska. Secretary Jewell recently signed a letter, a secretarial order for cooperative management and just last week, two weeks now, we signed a memorandum of agreement for AITRC and the Department of Interior for AITRC to manage the wildlife on federal lands. This is pretty historic. It's huge. We're going to be managing wildlife on the National Park Service and BLM lands in our traditional territories.

One of the things, though, that this was a compromise. We had wanted to get management of our own land and we couldn't get that. Right now, it's under state jurisdiction. There's been talking about if we did get under this MOA management of our own lands, that there'd be some potential lawsuits with the federal government because we're taking away state's rights. So, we're going to continue to push for that, we're going to continue to push to get management of our own land. We have 1.5 million acres now; we're entitled to 1.7. The state currently has 1.5 million acres in over selections in our traditional territory. That's just as much as we have. And if that land could also be under federal jurisdiction because it's selected and not

conveyed to the state of Alaska, that would be a huge increase to our ability to have a rural priority for hunting on those lands.

I know I kind of spoke to this a couple of years ago, three years ago when I fell into tears about the need and the importance of having subsistence resources, our ability to hunt and fish on our own lands. Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act says that it extinguishes our right to subsistence. And that was in negotiations. They pulled that piece out because it was controversial and they wanted to get ANCSA passed so they could draw oil.

ANILCA, Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act tried to remedy that. Instead of saying that there was a native preference, they said we're a rural priority. And so we share that subsistence priority with our non-tribal neighbors and it's based on where you live. So, if we move away to go to work, to go to school, we lose that priority. And I've got to tell you that in my 50 plus years on this earth, there's not been a time that I haven't eaten food from home no matter where I lived. That's just who we are. So if we can gain management of our own lands, we can set priority for our tribal people to hunt on our own lands.

That's what I'd ask is for some support in that because the lands were withheld from the state's ability to select it prior

to ANCSA. They never had jurisdiction over those lands. So we believe that the secretary has the authority within her power to withdraw ANCSA lands from state management over wildlife. We definitely appreciate some support in that.

One other thing in regards to the CIG grant, it's been phenomenal. The folks in D.C. have been great to work with, we've got some great partnerships going in the state and it's building our credibility and our capacity to manage wildlife on our lands. We will be pursuing one of the RCPP grants to follow on to implement what we've developed under this program.

So I just wanted to come and tell you thank you very much, and welcome the new board members and just say come and visit Alaska. You'll be able to see how diverse and how rural we are. You only can fly in. It gets to be a trip and burdensome.

In regards to NRCS practices and things like that, those fee schedules don't fit Alaska's economy. That's something that we'd like to see addressed. When you have to wait for summer weather so that you can barge things upriver or up the coast, and then if you miss that window of opportunity and you have to fly materials in, it can multiply that to the nth degree and almost make it impossible. You can use your entire grant or fee schedule just in transportation cost. So that's it. I'm starting to ramble. But if you have any questions, feel free to

contact me. Josiah has my email address and that kind of stuff.
Thank you.

Leslie Wheelock: Thank you, Karen. Angela?

Angela Peter: I just wanted to add something real quick.
Thank you, Karen. I know when I started my term on this council that I said that my concern was that the villages are dying out. Four years later, things are moving in that direction. We went by the hospital. They have three new buildings after the two that they just built. When asked, one of the workers said it's because of the natives in Anchorage are doubling in size, tripling in size. We've got to find a way to help and that's just what I wanted to say.

Karen Linnell: Thank you. I knew I was forgetting something. So, recently, we were just awarded a Department of Energy grant. Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission has been working on with this CIG grant, working with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services, tribal wildlife grants, and through one of our tribes to use EQIP programs, partnering with our landowners to do moose browse habitat enhancement projects. We've done about 1500 acres. We've done some modeling. We've done some equipment testing. We've got a RDBG grant to purchase equipment. We've used an RBEG grant to assist one of our tribes in building a pellet mill and briquette mill. So while we're doing wildlife habitat enhancement, we hope to get biofuels from

that so that they can make the pellets and the briquettes. We hope to create jobs by doing this and we're looking at Department of Energy to help us to write that regional energy plan. So we're working through multiple agencies and multiple departments within agencies to get this to be successful. Energy is huge.

We've had a lot of outmigration in our communities. My grandson's school was the K-12 school. It was over 125 students. Now, it's about 70 and that's a huge outmigration. We've had in the last ten years four schools close in our communities. That's just in one school district. I have three school districts in my traditional territory. But that's pretty significant. We're trying to work through multiple agencies to get this to work, to create jobs, create economy in our region and to be able to put food on our table. Again, we appreciate the USDA and the programs that we've been able to use and work with.

Leslie Wheelock: Other comments or questions?

Male Voice: [Off mic/inaudible]

Karen Linnell: Thank you.

Erin Parker: I'll take my cue from Mark. This is Erin. I'll just say that the Farm Bill is a great place to make those kinds of statutory changes. That work is going to be starting

pretty soon. I think those subcommittees will start to meet in March but now is not too early to start to make those plans.

Karen Linnell: I'm going to give the same offer that I just gave to IAC. Just tell us how we can help you help us and we're more than willing. We're very hands-on. I have a very strong working board as do the rest of the TCDs. In the state, we have 14 now, possibly 16 soon, so, yeah. And I'm hoping to get a tribal college going.

Erin Parker: Thank you.

Josiah Griffin: Thank you. So, the next person that we have on the list is Ferdinand Notah.

Ferdinand Notah: Good afternoon, council members. First of all, my name is Ferdinand Notah. I'm from Navajo Nation. I'm of the Todich'ii'nii clan or Bitter Water clan and Táchii'nii is my father's clan or Red-Running-Into-the-Water. First of all, congratulations on your appointments or reappointments. It's nice to speak before this group. I worked formerly with Mr. Gilbert Harrison when he was on the group, kind of giving him a pep talk and so forth. But I guess the mission of the council is to look at barriers of the USDA. I will help to maybe provide some input here. I'm available, we are available. The Department of Agriculture is where I work. More specifically, I work with our tribal ranching program where we ranch on deeded [sounds like] lands, not trust lands.

In my former hat, at one time, I was a USDA employee with the old Farmers Home Administration. But I want to bring out a few points for the group to mull over. Number one, Navajo Nation is a vast territory, basically. It covers three states or is in three states - Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah. About 17 million acres, okay, and much of it is grazing. There are some farm lands. Roselynn, as you know is working with our tribal farm up there in Farmington.

One of the issues that we have on Navajo is the servicing of programs. Number one, we deal with three states, eleven counties, so getting the programs out to our people has not been very successful in the past. There's a lot of reasons for that. Arizona has taken up an initiative to work with the Arizona communities as well as take on some of the New Mexico communities and also Utah. So they've expanded their territories, so to speak.

But in New Mexico, where we have deeded properties and a big checkerboard nightmare where lands are either trust lands, deeded lands, or allotted lands. We have state grazing leases, BLM grazing leases, Forest Service leases and so forth, as well as private. So, that area is more or less served with three county offices: one out of Aztec, New Mexico; another one out of Grants, New Mexico; and another one out of Gallup, okay. But the performance of these offices has been very dismal up to this

point. There's a lot of issues related to why or reasons for that.

First of all, one thing, is our farmers or ranchers, they lack resources. They lack equipment, they lack capital, and that has compounded the problem to where many of our grazing and farm permits are sitting idle. Okay, like throwing a number out, let's say 13,000 permits are out there and there's only about maybe 7,000 or 8,000 that are idle, the rest are active. There are a lot of reasons again for that. So how do we increase the access for these people? There are some financing that's needed for basics, such as equipment. For the irrigated farm areas, you need capital for seeds, fertilizer, et cetera. Marketing is a problem. A lot of families have sustainable farms and they're not production-oriented to where they produce a crop to take it out to market. Roxie talked to you a little bit earlier about some marketing opportunities.

Another thing is like with NRCS, when our producers access NRCS funds. They get a 1099 at the end of the year, so you have to pay taxes on that, those ones that were received. But on some other aspects, production or revenue that's generated off local farms is tax exempt, like on grazing because we're grazing on the natural resource of the tribe and that resource is held in trust, therefore it's tax exempt. But potentially, farm income would be taxable under IRS codes. As a result, a lot of

people back away from participating in the government programs because they don't want to pay taxes.

The other issues have to deal with many of our permits were issued out years and years ago and the original permittees are now deceased. So now those permits are in probate and the courts have a backlog of dealing with allocating out those permits to the heirs. And there again, since there's no one individual responsible for that permit because of the probate status, no one wants to go out on a limb and borrow money on that permit. That creates a problem from USDA because they don't want to lend on a permit that's in probate.

The other is that if you look at the Navajo lifestyle and culture, we were all brought up in the agricultural lifestyle, and we basically grew up on family farms. Our family farms are very small in nature compared to, let's say, the Midwest or other reservations. So, one of the missions that we have with agriculture, with the tribe is how do we revitalize the farming and ranching? How do we bring in value adding systems? How do we improve irrigation systems, projects that are fully depreciated?

The other issue is like on dry land farms or ranches. We're dealing with a long-term drought. Right now, we're probably going on 12 or 13 years of drought. So, basically, we have a desertification process going on, on our reservation, but

there's some potential for development. As a result, like another issue we have wild horses that compete with our ranchers. And last count, we have at least, since we talked to our Fish and Wildlife, they did a survey recently, they said, well, we've got about 12,000 wild horses on Navajo. So it's either our cattle have feed, wildlife have feed, or the horses have the feed. The horses seem to be dominant.

Another thing about USDA is recently, the Risk Management Agency came out with an insurance program or they did several years ago when the Farm Bill came out. But that program for crop insurance for pasture, rangeland and forage insurance was based on vegetative indexes. When the planes flew over, the tumbleweed was green and vibrant growing out there. It showed up on the radar as green; therefore, those areas were not covered. But RMA made some adjustments and changed the program into a rainfall index guide. Basically, the insurance programs are going to be based on lack of precipitation now.

We enrolled in the program to insure about 7 million acres of grazeable land on Navajo. It's going to cost us but we also are innovative, so to speak. Because several years ago, the BIA was sued by Navajo Nation for mismanaging our natural resources and settlement was made. That brought in about \$554 million plus interest. After attorney fees and so forth, that dropped down about \$405,000 but now, it's being build back up.

So we devised the program to where we will use this fund to insure our annual premium payments under this insurance. Our premium payments will run about \$20 million a year. USDA subsidizes about \$22 million of that. But our portion is \$20 million. However, the indemnity payments that are expected will far exceed that based on analytical models. And we're hoping to set up an agriculture infrastructure fund with that excess. So in other words, we pay a \$20 million premium but our indemnity payments will come in. We're projecting \$54 million in just one year's time. That will put \$30 million into an infrastructure fund. Now, our mission is to try to leverage that money with the USDA and other partners - Bureau of Reclamation, Army Corps of Engineers, and so forth.

Also, one thing I mentioned to the larger group, the IAC conference, is we'd like to use or approach RCPP with NRCS - the Regional Conservation Partnership Program. In the regs, the program was fashioned to where program adjustments can be made on items that are either regulatory or policy. Now, those things are in the statute. It will take an act of Congress to change. But there's a lot of policy issues that can be dealt with, regulatory issues that can be changed. And that's what we're proposing is that Indian country begin to look at those adjustments. And USDA will be receptive to that.

So one thing we're looking at is, like with Navajo Nation, part of our issue is getting individuals to apply for services. Well, Navajo Nation, a lot of times USDA frowns on Navajo Nation being the applicant for funding. So now, New Mexico with NRCS were negotiating an alternative funding arrangement where Navajo Nation can apply for funds. So we are applying for RCPP funding for a watershed planning project. The other is the Nation basically just recently approved a CDFI program coming into effect. But that sends a signal to this council that USDA loan programs have been inactive. As a result, the Nation is trying to do a CDF program to fill that void and fashion a loan program. IAC is undertaking the same type of initiative to set-up a CDFI program.

The other thing that I wanted to mention real quickly are if the council can look at Indian country as how do you promote food sovereignty on our lands, natives feeding natives basically. And our picture would be Navajos feeding Navajo. And we're looking to our tribal farm to help us do that. So agriculture on Navajo can be a very huge economic force if it's worked on. We'll work on the old irrigation systems that are fully depreciated and begin to replace those systems to more advanced systems and develop agribusiness, the value adding aspect.

We also have elected officials that we work with from our end. We have approximately, 143 elected officials, either a grazing committee person, a farm board official, or in the eastern part of the reservation, we have land board officials. So the message here is USDA worked with these individuals also to implement programs to get the outreach out there to those people. Because these are people that deal with individual permittees on Navajo.

The other is the youth programs, micro-loans, great idea. However, youth have a problem going back to Navajo saying I want to farm or I want to ranch. However, everything's tied up. There's no land available for them other than a backyard at home. So that's one issue we're trying to deal with, make land available for the youth to come in and begin to take over Navajo agriculture. So anything you can do to promote youth involvement would be welcome.

Roxie mentioned the gardening effort. She does a lot of gardening workshops out on the reservation to try to get people back into getting dirty and muddy because that's how some of us were brought up. It's that if you want to be a farmer, you have to learn to play with mud for the rest of your life.

The other is developing agriculture programs into our curriculum, high school, grade school. Years ago, those were part of our curriculum. But nowadays, there's no interest in

agricultural curriculum. So hopefully, USDA, this council can help open those doors for our people and our youth to get back into farming and ranching.

In closing, basically, we told Gilbert this, Gilbert Harrison, before - bring your council out to Navajo. Have them experience Navajo. Have them experience, look at the overgrazing that has occurred because of land management issues that we have to face. Have them look at the old idle farms that were once productive at one point in time. But now, the canal systems are all filled with dirt and dust. They are settled out and need replacement. But nobody wants to fund the replacement because of the cost.

So anyway, in parting, those are basically I want to make these comments and hopefully sticks in your mind. But we do welcome you out to experience our end of the world or our nature in this world.

Leslie Wheelock: Thank you, Mr. Notah.

Ferdinand Notah: Thank you.

Leslie Wheelock: If you could stay for a second. Mr. Wadsworth.

Mark Wadsworth: Just for my education, I guess, you referred to your range permits as some of them being idle.

Ferdinand Notah: Yes.

Mark Wadsworth: Is that the correct term, the permit is idle?

Ferdinand Notah: Yes.

Mark Wadsworth: And then you referred to your permits as being a part of the probate situation. So is there a time limit when you have a permit that you have other people to have them or is it just indefinite? Or I guess, I'm trying to understand how that permit --

Ferdinand Notah: Well, the permit, number one, is issued by BIA. It's a BIA permit.

Mark Wadsworth: For how many years?

Ferdinand Notah: There's no term.

Mark Wadsworth: No term?

Ferdinand Notah: No term on those permits. So basically, when a person deceases, that becomes a piece of the property that gets into probate court to be decided how it will be divided among the heirs. Now, some of our farm boards, let's say one particular farm board, they have gone out and cancelled 33 permits that are sitting idle. And they want to reissue those permits to new permittees including youth. But now, BIA can't find a permit. They can't find the original permits. So that's part of the mismanagement of our whole land system by BIA. And that's one of the reasons why we went through a lawsuit several years ago.

Mark Wadsworth: I have managed a range program. We have five-year permits. And the permit we generally have at least two signatures of people you know that are operating in there.

Ferdinand Notah: And because of that idleness, that has brought people to thinking that because they have a permit, they can develop it anyway they see fit. As a result, you have homes, mobile homes, and other improvements going up on the land. But those are not authorized structures. So you have a lot of trespass issues and family disputes and so forth that arise from that. But these are things that our elected officials deal with. The bulk of their workload is dealing with complaints and disputes along with permits.

Mark Wadsworth: And on the taxable bit with the EQIP programs and stuff, I was just going to maybe mention it to Mark or somewhere is that, I think, in some cases when they receive that 1099 for a \$10,000 EQIP program, they naturally assume that that whole \$10,000 is taxed. Or it's when if they did that project, they can show the cost of their hours on the machine, the cost of the equipment to put that into, everything going against that cost, of that \$10,000. So in essence, they could even show a loss if it did cost more in the case. But I think we need that education out there because if they're assuming that \$10,000 is all taxable, we've got a problem here. We got to bury [sounds like] it [indiscernible]

Male Voice: [Off-mic/indiscernible]

Ferdinand Notah: CPAs are going to make a killing on Navajo.

Tawney Brunsch: Wait. This is Tawney. If I could just interject, there is some free tax assistance. Have them seek out the VITA sites with your IRS-certified tax returns [sounds like], Lakota Fund's IM [phonetic] fund. I know we can also be certified to prepare Schedule C's and we deal with that all the time. You know what I mean? It's just a matter of educating the recipient of the 1099 that they need to seek out additional even if it's free tax assistance with that and make sure you show a loss.

Ferdinand Notah: Good advice. Thank you. So anyway, I look forward to the council helping to protect our culture and our lifestyle and traditions in agriculture.

Leslie Wheelock: Sarah.

Sarah Vogel: This was fascinating. And by the way, please say hi to Gilbert from all of us.

Ferdinand Notah: Yes, I would.

Sarah Vogel: Send him a big hello.

Ferdinand Notah: I got his phone number on my phone.

Sarah Vogel: Good. I had the same two questions that Mark did about the idea of the permit being tied up in probate and causing the vacancy of all that land. And I know that the BIA

has different regions. But at least in the region that's headquartered in South Dakota, I think, in the Aberdeen area, they're wickered about cancelling permits. They watch them like a hawk. If the very person isn't operating them, they're canceled. People wanted longer term leases so that they could afford to make the improvements and they could be amortized or repaired timely putting in fences. Who wants to put in a fence if it's a five-year lease? That is so dissonant and it's all laid out in the CFR, at the federal regulations, as to the maximum term. So there's something really wrong it seems with the way that that's being run.

Ferdinand Notah: See, on the farming permits, agricultural land use permit, there's a two-year window. So if the permit is not utilized within that two-year window, the permit can be revoked and reissued.

Sarah Vogel: Sure.

Ferdinand Notah: However, no actions will be taken.

Sarah Vogel: I don't know, does everybody else think that's really odd? I mean, the BIA isn't here unfortunately but --

Ferdinand Notah: But the other point I want to make - Ross brought this out to the main group this morning - is that NRCS has spent more in one year than BIA has spent on that whole Indian agriculture in the past 20 years. So NRCS is now the

forerunner in delivering services. The other programs need to catch up.

Sarah Vogel: Well, thank you very much. There's a lot of challenges.

Ferdinand Notah: Okay. Well, thank you. I hope I made some good marks with the council here. And Roselynn, we'll work together with you on that. I used to work at NAPI at one point so I know where I was [indiscernible] to go.

Leslie Wheelock: Thank you, sir.

Ferdinand Notah: Okay. Thank you.

Male Voice: Thank you.

Leslie Wheelock: To Mr. Notah's point on the Regional Conservation Partnership Program, RCPP, having some flexibility in it, the language was built with flexibility in it because it's a new program. The regulations were put together with the hope of getting originally a lot of money out the door as quickly as possible. And there were circumstances that we were, in putting the regulation together, guessing at. So in order to allow maximum flexibility for unforeseen circumstances and for questions and concerns, there's flexibility at the level of the chief of NRCS to make discretionary determinations in that program. Sherry.

Sherry Crutcher: Our tribe recently applied for RCPP for \$2 million. But our match was \$3 million. We had to do the

match. Luckily, we have the \$55 million settlement to uphold that match. And that was just to keep the animals off the riparian network [sounds like]. So right now, the problem that we ran into, and the reason I know it is because my program is almost directly involved with it. It's our new irrigation program that's put in for the grant or put in for the RCPP. We ran into problems because a lot of our land, it's trust but it's individual titles tied up [sounds like] in leases on the land. So the riparian area, it's the paperwork. It's what we ran into that held us up and still holding us up as far as making sure that everything is in place. The money came through fine, but to try to spend it and get people to apply it in the correct manner is where a lot of our problems are found.

Leslie Wheelock: Thank you. Thank you for that.

Josiah Griffin: The next individual that we have on our list is James McCuen. Sir, if you wouldn't mind standing up and [cross-talking].

James McCuen: Good afternoon. I'm James McCuen. I'm a board member on the Intertribal Agriculture Council. I'm the treasurer. I'm an enrolled member in the Colville Tribe in Central Washington State. So, you know where I come from and I know most of you who sitting here. So I want to thank the volunteers doing this work. You're doing a marvelous job. And

I'm not going to bitch on anybody. What I come here to do today is to tell you a little anecdote.

When you got a company or you go down the street and you go to your lawyer and you give him \$1,000 retainer to be your lawyer, what did you just do when he accepted that money? Whatever you've done, I gave him \$1,000 and I do something, guess what? I hired him to make it legal, right? Didn't I? I mean, people sitting up here that have the rules and regulations for us to have to follow them. If they don't change them and leave them alone, we can bend them enough to make it fit us. When you started out, you made a good thing there a little bit ago. You said, in this one, they made it so like that that you could qualify and get the money. Okay. That's fine. But the laws that they passed way back when, they put pretty stringent language in there.

But you can always bend them enough to make them legal so that these tribes and individual Indians can get what they need to get done. You see where I'm coming from? I'm a firm believer in that. First off, if you go look at me and any of the programs, I've never signed up for one. When I was a kid growing up, my dad said unless you're broke, standing in a welfare line or whatnot, why are you standing there with your hand out? You're supposed to be enough of a farmer to make a living. I don't care if you're brown, white, black, or green.

That's what he talked when I was growing up. Well, I went into farming and this is how it went. I worked my little tail off 20 hours a day. My wife helped me and we made almost a success of farming. But didn't make enough money to eat on and we had a baby.

So this has got to change. So I went to work for the tribe 42 years ago and I retired last February. I still got my ranch. I still got a few cows, a damn horse or two or three or four. But I've done it without a handout as my dad would have called it, or using a program. Still, I do what I'm supposed to with the land, take care of it. Or with my animals, I take care of them. You got them, feed them. You're responsible, man. And so as long as we start thinking along that line, this place should be a hell of a lot better place to live in. Everybody going down the street they're the same. Oh, crap. He threw his cigarette butt down. You know, pick it up and throw it in the garbage. Don't complain. You see him throw the next one, throw him down and tell him to pick it up. Solve the problem yourself.

So that's the only thing that I wanted to tell you because I've known Mark when he was a dang kid. He didn't even shave. I've known most of you a long time. And I'm not going to complain at you about this program is not working for me. Or the fence that they tell me is a boundary fence because it goes

between range units. It's not a boundary fence. We own both sides of it. So it can't be a boundary fence. And I'm already getting that work done.

So thank you for being here. I wish I got here earlier so I could have heard some more of the comments put out there because I might be walking on somebody toes and I really don't care. But I came to town, I was in the youth conclave the first day and they were sitting there and listening to me. And one of the presenters for NAP [phonetic] is saying she's having trouble getting the people, the enrolled members addresses and whatnot so she could send -- "Well, now I'd show you how to do that," I said. My superintendent sat right out there. "Mike." He said, "Yeah." I said, "Can she have the names to put on her stuff so we can get the survey going?" And he said, "Yeah." And that's, okay, that's the way you do it. Go do it.

Those kids were sitting there and I said, now, there's one language or one word you don't want to ever take. It's not in my language. It's no. When I go to the FSA office and talk to them and they tell me no - no, no, it's got to work. I don't care if it's in Timbuktu or on my reservation. It's got to work. That's why the government set it up to make it work. I know these guys that wrote it weren't dummies. They might just have been bean counters or something. But they wrote it up and it's the law. So we cannot take no for an answer. If you do

that for us, we'll back you. Okay. Thank you. I think that's all I got to say which is really short.

Leslie Wheelock: Thank you, sir.

James McCuen: No, I'm James. I'm not that old.

Josiah Griffin: So the next person that I have on the list is Ladd Edmo. And for anyone who has not signed in yet, I would ask that you please sign in on the sheet that is on the table by the door. Thank you.

Ladd Edmo: Good afternoon. I'm glad to be here. I just wanted to come and tell you, the council here, that I want to thank each and every one of you and the ones that were here last year that the words I spoke and the way I presented it may not have been exactly how I wanted to say it. But I'm here today to tell you all, thank you for your input and your listening, and hopefully, your guidance in our process.

Last year, when I was here, I told you we were going to go to the NAD process. We had some violations on some CRP lands and/or CCRP or a safe program, programs that we have with the NRCS and FSA. So anyway, we went through the process and it was determined that, basically, we didn't win. But they subdued [sounds like] to the complaints. And the complaints could be brought forth that they were accurate. So they withdrew their judgment against the tribes there. We had seven violations in seven different areas there.

So right now, we're progressing forward. And it's been determined that we become farmers almost because we're taking this old dry farm and we're turning it into a conservation reserve. And it's working. It's bringing back the wildlife. It's enhancing the native species. At the same time, we're planting and spraying. That's the part where we have the challenge as a tribe.

On our tribe, those programs are huge. Also, we do have allotted lands on some of that. So that's not money that's going strictly to the tribe. It's shared with the allottees. And there are allottees that have their lands in those programs also. They're the ones that have this major challenge of how they're going to spray their 160 acres or so or even more or till or even seed or reseed or even buying seed. My understanding is buying seed is expensive. But it's doable as a tribe because we've been getting payments and then the payment has been going back into the maintenance of all of these programs.

So with all of that, I just wanted to thank you all once again. And then the process with our local agents and everybody that was here earlier today, they said a lot of good words about they would like that these program managers, tech staff, or what have you, are willing to work with their local tribes or local recipients. I think it's a learning process that when new

people come in that they can understand the tribes and kind of see what kind of laws they have and proceed forward with that as best they can. So far, it's been tremendously improved and we're happy with that. And we would like to see that maybe we will establish our own district or get some of our members on their boards. But that's work in progress.

And also, we were awarded a grant for grassland reserves. And we were extremely pleased with that. We applied for it and we were first denied. I think it was 2016. We didn't score high enough on that at that time. But just a couple of weeks ago, we heard that we were awarded. Like I said, we're ecstatic. And we have plenty more grasslands we want to put in. We're willing to [audio glitch]. And we're ready to work with all these programs just as everybody else is and accept all the challenges. Thank you.

Leslie Wheelock: Thank you very much.

Josiah Griffin: Thank you, sir. And we've got a few new folks since last year so if you don't mind --

Ladd Edmo: Right, right. I don't recognize everybody. I just recognize the lady here and Mark and --

Sarah Vogel: Sarah.

Ladd Edmo: -- Sarah. She's the attorney lady. She gave me some good advice last year and I appreciate that. Thank you.

Josiah Griffin: If you wouldn't mind saying your tribal affiliation and your work.

Ladd Edmo: Yes. Sorry. My name is Ladd Edmo. I'm a member of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes in Southeast Idaho. And my position with the tribes is I'm a land use policy commissioner. It's an elected position. I represent our tribes in these types of issues and more: grazing, leasing, farming, water, air, environmental waste, all those things across the board. It's a four-year term and my term ends on 2018. So I look forward to [audio glitch]. That's it.

Leslie Wheelock: Thank you. Thank you very much. From inside USDA, I'm watching this episode unfold, if you will. I know it's been a challenge, and it's been a learning experience for both sides. We do appreciate and congratulate you on that grassland project.

Ladd Edmo: [Off-mic] Guys, keep up the good work.

Josiah Griffin: Thank you, sir. So the time now is 3:56. I have no further names on my list. Is there anyone else from the public who would like to provide a comment?

Mark Wadsworth: If not, I make a motion that the comment period cease. We also have a 20-minute break or something.

Leslie Wheelock: We can't really close the comment period because it's noted in the --

Mark Wadsworth: *Federal Register*.

Leslie Wheelock: -- *Federal register*.

Mark Wadsworth: So we got four minutes.

Female Voice: We can take four minutes.

Leslie Wheelock: However, we do take notice of the request for a break. Trent, if we do decide to take a break, you are officially the next item on at 4:00. Can you give us a little time off?

Trent Teegerstrom: Take a break.

Leslie Wheelock: Okay. Thank you.

[Off-mic comments]

Leslie Wheelock: I mean, you all could talk but we need to stay in session.

Josiah Griffin: Vote in favor?

Female Voices: Aye. [Cross-talking]

[Break 1:23:00 - 1:24:31]

Leslie Wheelock: We're going to go ahead and reconvene. It's now 4:21. And our next presenter is Trent Teegerstrom who is the FRTEP agent at the University of Arizona to talk about the FRTEP program.

Trent Teegerstrom: All right. Thanks, council members, for inviting me to speak with you. It's great to do this. There's a little change on the title there. I handed you guys out this. And I realized it's kind of small print, so take your

time reading it later on but it kind of hit on some of the highlights.

I'm Trent Teegerstrom from the University of Arizona and the associate director of Tribal Extension programs and FRTEP. And then I'm also the ag econ extension specialist for the state. So it kind of covers all those different areas. So what I wanted to do basically is just kind of a snapshot. If you go to that slide 2, just kind of Arizona Indian country, if you're not familiar with it, I know some are very familiar with Arizona and the tribes there. There are 22 of them, co-located. All but three of our counties have some tribal lands in them. And of course, Navajo Nation covers the three states. And we currently have seven tribal agents that are FRTEP-related which is Federally Recognized Tribal Extension Program that you guys have been hearing about. We have seven of those. But we also have some others that are state-funded. One particularly on the Navajo Nation in Window Rock for a 4-H program coordinator we have there.

On slide 3 is just a supply and demand because I'm always looking at this from the ag econ side. So what do we have at the FRTEP program and necessarily in here is we're looking at agents per tribal members and the acres they cover. We already heard how big Navajo Nation alone was. The tribe lands in Arizona are a third of the state, depending on who you talk to.

But close to a third of the state is owned by tribal lands. The agent per programming areas, I said, there's seven of them for that entire land mass and the 22 tribes. So it's a bit of a challenge on us. Some of the other tribes that I work with that don't have agents, Gila River, Havasupai - we're revisiting that lately - Tohono O'odham Nation, and then the White Mountains, South River, Fort McDowell, Ak-Chin, Cocopah, and a few others that we have ongoing relations with.

If you turn to page 2 there, that first diagram is just kind of a structure of Navajo Nation because we have three agents on Navajo Nation. So they provided me the slide just trying to deal with it. And a little ball in the middle, you see there, is actually the figure where the FRTEP kind of comes in as a way to tying some of the information together and get the resources talking together. So as you can see, there are 110 chapter houses. Each one has elected officials. So again, you're talking about trying to get programs out there. You have to be familiar with those programs, familiar with how to do it, who to approach, and it takes time and it takes experience to be out there to do that. And that's one of the key things that FRTEP's bringing.

Strong partnerships, is another strength, I think, that we have in Arizona certainly. We are increasing the communication collaboration with Arizona serving 1994s because we are not

doing this in a vacuum. It's not just about the FRTEP program. It's about serving Indian country better. And that's where we've been having these communications with Diné College, Tohono O'odham Community College, Navajo Technical University, Southwestern Indian Polytech, and then the Institute of American Indian Art. Most of those are in New Mexico but that's okay. We're still working with those.

And then we also do work with non-profits because a lot of times, it's quicker to get some things done with non-profit so we partner with them in handling different issues depending on what needs to be done there. You see a list of a few of them that I put down on there. We also look for additional funding besides the FRTEP. So it's not enough as you guys have heard several times. There's not enough out there. We barely have enough to cover their salaries, let alone operations and all that. So we do look for other ones in the Western Center for Risk Management - the Western Center - Risk Management First Nations, First Things First, SNAP-Ed. All of these are coming into play and we are utilizing as much of these resources that we can get. Some agents are better at getting it than others. And sometimes, the specialist will step in and get these grants and then pull the agent in so we can better serve across the state. UA typically has about 33 to 35 FTEs working on Indian country at any given time.

So the next page is the selection issues. And what I wanted to address on this is just talk a little bit about youth development 4-H programs that we have out there. When I say the FRTEP tribes, those are the tribes that have agents on them from the FRTEP program. And then the non-FRTEP tribes are the ones who don't. So if you're reading down on this, I guess it's the third page, middle slide down there. So the FRTEP ones, Colorado River Indian Tribe, we have a formal 4-H program with clubs on that one. It's a 4-H tribal agent who's split-funded by the tribe, the state, and a little bit of FRTEP money, not a whole lot. And we also have a full-time FRTEP agent on that one. These are some of the programs that they're doing. We have the San Carlos, we have a mix of traditional and different partnerships.

It's a little harder to get some of that going in there but we're working on trying to get those. So we're partnering with the Boys and Girls Clubs in that case to try to get some synergies, and again, utilize better resources that we have available. And I just mentioned the Navajo Nation where we're talking working with the 1994s and some of the other ones, again, partnering with some of the other folks that are doing youth out there. And we just added that state-funded 4-H program coordinator in Window Rock. So that was a pretty good thing that we were able to get done there.

And to strengthen youth, again, on the bottom slide there on the non-tribal ones. We're in the process of doing in that one with the FRTEP program because they understand that the funds are limited on that. Otherwise, we would be trying to get them FRTEP programs. But because they're not, we've got to work around that. So Gila River Indian Community, we process establishing a 4-H program. We've gone around. They're looking at funding the position, maybe two positions for three to five years. We've gone to four standing committees and then we're going around to each of the districts getting letters from them to make sure that everybody wants it before we do it. And then they will begin. We've got one more district to go. But all of the six of the districts so far are on board. So we're really excited about that one.

Tohono O'odham Nation, we just hired a Creek [phonetic] tribal member as a 4-H agent in Pima County which extends into the Tohono O'odham Nation. He is going to start doing work in Tohono O'odham. And I'm putting him in contact with the Tohono O'odham Community College so they can start kind of doing some synergies around STEM and everything with that. So we're working on that as well. And White Mountain Apaches, we are working with our county up there who is doing some of the STEM programs and natural resource programs with their kids. But

they have to currently come off nation to do that but we're working on that.

So on page 4 is where I started. I'm not going to read all of this. I'll let you guys read some more. I know you guys are tired and you got a lot of stuff going on. But there are some things that I wanted to hit on here about what we're doing, what the FRTEP agents are doing in trying to solve problems. So on that first slide up here on page 4 is just some of the issues that we're facing up there.

On Hopi-Navajos, some storm events were causing flooding from a Navajo community downstream into the Hopi residents. And that's based on a road design. So the way the ADOT came in and designed the road, it was causing this immense amount of water and these rain events would come down and flood down and do different things there. And then Hopis also purchased four non-tribal ranches and we're converting them back to trust land. And the state land was a problem there. They're hung up on that. So we're trying to get that.

And then some of the non-FRTEP tribes, some other things that we were doing, the other one I did talk about Creek [phonetic]. They couldn't hire some of their tribal members to become irrigators out there. It's mainly an irrigated land thing. They couldn't hire irrigators on their own because they couldn't pass the test. So our FRTEP agents said, well, we

could fix that. So they initiated a program working with BIA to train individuals how to take the test and what to do with it. And now, they're starting to be able to actually get some people hired back and stay on the tribe. So that was a pretty good one.

The non-FRTEP ones, we've done some feedlot evaluations. That's with some specialists and I bring some students in there so they can present findings in front of the farm board just so they have experience doing that kind of stuff. And Tohono O'odham which is having some larger issues out there, we were able to bring in some other individuals to talk about opportunity. We might have to take some of their food needs in working with non-profits like TOCA and a few of these other ones. We're looking at, like, some of the programs that you mentioned before the Farmers Market Promotion Program. And some of these other programs we were able to pull in and be able to get them, like to be able to create a mill. So now when they do their mesquite beans they don't have to travel all the way across. That's going to be built on San Xavier Cooperative Farms. So they will be able to grind their own mesquite beans and stuff like that. So those are kind of the issues up here.

And then the bottom slide in there, I started talking about what we did to kind of solve those issues. And on the FRTEP tribes, the flooding issue, we actually had the Speaker of the

House for Arizona wanted to come up there. We were able to get him to come up there to do a listening session. Him as well as one of the state senators and state congress representative, they sat down. We set the meetings up. And they just listened to what the issues were from each of the tribes separately. So, each one could focus on Hopi when they were there and Navajo when they were there. The Speaker of the House promised that he would look at this. As far as I know when I was following up with him, they've had meetings with ADOT, Arizona Department of Transportation, to fix those roads, fix that drainage problem. They're also working with the Hopi on the land issue. And the state land director, it's one of her top fives to do. And I talked with her to make sure she is following up. She said she was because she was told to. So that's been really good. So that was one of the actions that we did there.

And then some of the non-tribal ones, we talked about on the Tohono O'odham where they have a lot of issues with food, distribution systems of food out there, because of the great distance they have. We had a SNAP director from California, for the western region, come out and they held a listening session and talked about some of the programs that they have for employment into the food industry with one of the laws that was coming into the state. By putting that meeting together, we were able to actually try to get some synergies around and try

to focus on where we can do some employment and try to increase local food like some of the non-profits, like in San Xavier we're doing the wild harvesting of the mesquite beans, the cholla buds and some of these other things. They're able to hire these people and use some of those programs to that.

And then one of the other things that came up while working with non-profits on the White Mountain Apaches which was non-FRTEP, we were able to help them do some ranch 101s. Bringing one of their cattle associations kind of back up just complete no fences, cows running wild, they didn't know how many cows they had, everything was down. We slowly started to work with them, their land office, bringing in specialists, bringing in other people to talk with them about that, how to rebuild, how to do it if they had some money from First Nation. And for the first time this last spring, we actually worked cattle on that operation with that group. And I brought up the extension veterinarian to test their bulls and stuff. So they're really excited about that.

Continuing on down here, just strengthening tribal programs, we're working on building capacity with the 1994s to talk about that. As the 1862s, we had over 150 years of doing this. The 1994s have only had 22 years. It's been kind of hit and miss on some of the funding. But they're getting a lot

better at it. We're going to try to build more synergies around that.

So in light of that, one of the things that we're doing in January, we're going to be having a meeting. We first met at the FALCON meeting. Does everybody know what the FALCON meetings are? It's the association of all the land grants for the United States. I think there are 38 or 39 1994 tribal land grant colleges. This is their association where they all meet. So we met there and we had a discussion. We decided that we would come together as the Southwest Land Grant Institution and have meetings. And we're looking at split funding positions. We're going to find where our strength and weaknesses are and try to help each other a lot better instead of fighting over stuff. So that's going to happen on January 9th and 10th.

Am I going too fast? We'll have time for questions. One of the other things that I did is I really wanted to bring -- agricon is one of my main things. So what I really wanted to do is look at the value of the FRTEP program. We've had it there for a long time. But their value, there are these values that you can actually see with the programs that's why I wanted to do the action list and then the issues and how we are solving those. But there's the other stuff that goes with this. So on page 6, we look at the value of the FRTEP to Arizona. I only did Arizona because I had the data for that. So some notes, this

analysis does not include those additional funds brought in. So I talked about we're leveraging the funds. So they're going out and getting other grants. I didn't include that. I just wanted the FRTEP piece alone. So I left all that out. I had to make some slight adjustments because of Navajo Nation crossing over into New Mexico. If you know in-plan [sounds like], we use in-plan, the IO modeling. If it goes out of state, that's a leakage. So we had to make some adjustments for that because it's Navajo Nation and we didn't want it biased because of that.

We had our FRTEP funding spending from 2012 to 2015. So it was a five-year snapshot of what we're looking at. But during that year, that's when sequestration hit. So we took a big hit on top of that. The FRTEP funds were cut. So that includes that cut. So what you're going to see on here on the next one is the -- and everybody, I assume, got a copy of the actual study. So, there's a lot more information on that. The area study, of course, is Arizona. If you look at the spending categories that we had there, most of it is salary and wages. But there's other stuff that goes along with that.

When you look down, finally at six, and what we're looking at is even though there's an investment of \$527,000 for the seven agents out there, Arizona, nearly \$1 million per year is put back into the economy because of that. It's generated through the other ones. So you look at the indirect, the

induced, and the total direct and multiplier effect on that from employment, labor, income, value added, and I kind of focused on the value added as well. But if you look at total output, that's close to a million dollars. And that's on that far category over here.

So you do get your return on your investment in this program. And that's one thing I really thought that in USDA, they could see that there is a strong value to that besides all the other activities. But I had to lay out the activities and the others, addressing some of the issues. Of course, they're short. They have a lot of territory, a lot of things to do. But there is value to that. And it tends to kind of expand this out and look at it a little bit more.

So on moving forward on this next to the last slide on there, that really should say, FRTEP is "a power" not "the power," a source between tribes, tribal communities, universities, and resources. It's one of the cogs in the wheel but it was a pretty strong one that brings things to bear on that one. We have a positive impact at the local economy as well as to the communities around there. That is one of our missions both of the extension and the FRTEP to do that. It's flexible but like any model, it needs some stability. That's the biggest thing that we're facing on here is the instability of the FRTEP program. Every year, they got to fight against

each other. And then once they get it, then they've got to be working together again. But then, well, we got to call a truce [sounds like]. Now, you go out to your own camp and then you go fight each other for your own jobs again. And it seems like a really broke system. But we've been making it work for 27 years. But it's there.

That's real quick. I hope that's what you guys were looking for. Usually, I like to run around and poke at stuff, but a lot more stationary.

Mark Wadsworth: Trent, I guess, as one of the ag econ person talks to another, I love this portion where you're looking at the value added, putting people to work. And actually, that's a lot different than the way the corporate world looks at this stuff because we're actually putting people to work and benefiting our people [indiscernible]. And it's a direct effect. I think the three-and-a-half multiplier maybe in the non-Indian world [indiscernible].

Trent Teegerstrom: Well, that would be a stretch. I mean it depends on who you're looking at and what kind of study you have. But some of those, you got to be careful. I like using the valued added more because you're doing your direct expenditures but you're looking at those additional people you're putting to work from the expenses, the money coming in. So it may not be the biggest number, but that's okay.

Mark Wadsworth: Because we look at people putting them to work, helping our people out. Wherein, in the corporate end, they want to benefit people that don't do the work. You know, they love this sort of adverse -- it's the way they look at it [sounds like].

Trent Teegerstrom: Yeah. That's why I wanted to put balls [sounds like] in there and looking at like the irrigator story that we had in there. They're actually hiring them now and putting them back in there. Five of our seven FRTEP agents are natives and they live on their nations and they work on their nations. And one of the ones that's non-native has lived and worked on the Hopi Nation for 23 years. So, any other concerns or questions?

Mark Wadsworth: You or the group of FRTEP agents meet [indiscernible] in Arizona?

Trent Teegerstrom: Yes. From my perspective, yeah, I bring them in. We meet at least twice a year. And then I also include them into the state extension as much as possible because they need to talk with the specialist and the other ones. And then just in October, we had the National FRTEP Professional Development in Flagstaff. We brought New Mexico State University and everybody together and all the FRTEPs, as many as we could. It was to work on programs to talk about issues and how to better strategize with this. Now, I'm

bringing in 1994s more instead of being competitors. We're working on that.

Mark Wadsworth: And your FRTEP, you know, when you do an application through, is it automatically going through the land grant through their indirect to get to you?

Trent Teegerstrom: No. No. That is different. The FRTEP program is a 100 percent pass through. Zero indirects are allowed on that one. So, all the money that we write on that grant just comes through and straight back out to the communities. My cover, my salary, my trips to D.C., because I go out to D.C. maybe once or twice a year just to talk with program leaders, that all comes out of the state funds that they give me for being an associate director of Tribal Extension, as well as the pieces, the administration salary on that. None of that money from FRTEP is used in our administration for that. It all goes straight back out to the agents.

Mark Wadsworth: But that's basically a state-by-state fund?

Trent Teegerstrom: No. At FRTEP that's written in there that these are pass throughs with zero indirects allowed on it.

Sarah Vogel: We talked about this a little bit earlier. As I understand it, there needs to be a legislative change so you don't have this big internal work there followed by a period of peace followed by --

Trent Teegerstrom: Yeah, yeah, yeah. It's really hard for the agents to focus if they don't know if they're going to be there. And it's hard for the communities to say, well, are you going to stick around? We've been lucky, like I said, where we've been 20 some years. And you can see the results of that in some of these programs. But that's only because they've been there. They know who to go to. They know the system. And they may pull it in and listen to them. If we start messing that around, yeah, that's my concern.

Sarah Vogel: And then everybody sees your good work and they say, well, we would like one, too, which only occurred [sounds like] to you. But in terms of the legislative fix that is necessary in Congress, have you guys shared all the strategy to deal with that in Congress?

Trent Teegerstrom: We have. The last round, they said, because this is 3D [sounds like] monies, I think is which place it's in. It's a little confusing there because they just arbitrarily moved it one time. It was in a non-competitive group for a while. And then when the other monies came in, they just arbitrarily moved it to this, more 3D monies, I think, if I remember right. And then that came became a little more competitive. But the last round in 2013, 2014, the lawyers said that it was okay to do competition between the 36 but closing it to all others outside because there wasn't enough money to go

there. So we competed against ourselves but there was a base salary that was going to be a base amount to everybody. And they were only competing for the additional. It was still kind of an odd system. But it did allow it for nobody could come in and then take those. So at least the tribes knew they were going to have their agents. It's just how much we were going to have to make up to help them operate.

Sarah Vogel: But for future growth or future demands [cross-talking] language for amending the U.S. poll [sounds like].

Trent Teegerstrom: It would have come somehow pull it -- there are a couple of things I was talking that we've been doing. There's different ways you can do it. There is a waiver and I just found this out that I know the centers, the risk management centers, have been able to get a non-competition waiver because of the uniqueness of the work they're doing there. That is one thing that could be pursued. If the money were to increase, then they could move. They could open it up. Holding that, their 36 would be there and the additional monies were there; then, they could add in more programs so they came about. There's also moving it into completely different funds. I can't think off the top of my head all the different pots of money that are out there and what their names are.

One of the other things that we've done is set up an account within the Indian Land Tenure Foundation to help not stabilize necessarily the salaries because it's still part of the USDA to fund the FRTEP program. What that fund is set up to do is to help them get operation monies to support the program with efforts that they have. Maybe they need somebody like a program coordinator to help them get the program out further. Or maybe a new initiative comes up and they can't find money because nobody wants to fund this type of an issue, this would be a place that they could go do it. We're still working on exactly the best mechanism to stabilize it, but it's really --

Sarah Vogel: This is not an issue that the other land grants go through.

Trent Teegerstrom: Oh, no. No, they get the -- [cross-talking]

Sarah Vogel: My question is really, how do we make this, your program, like the other land grant programs?

Trent Teegerstrom: Well, if it was like the other ones, if you were getting into, and I want to make sure that I don't misspeak on which funds are which, but those are the Smith-Lever funds that they come into, where you get a set amount based on the formulas that's set and extension gets so much money from that. But then the states get money from that, too. That allows them. This is where that's different is that this would

have to be pretty much a federal, unless the state was willing to kick in that much.

Like in Arizona now, the majority of the Extension funds for the Extension overall, comes from grants and contracts, then the state, and then a small segment comes from the feds right now. If you were to put this into that, you would have to do some qualifiers to make sure that it went solely to Indian country. That's one thing. You couldn't just roll it into that type. If you just mix in, it would be eaten up by the other stuff. So you have to be very careful how you worded it, if you roll it into the Smith-Lever funds like that.

And that was a concern I had. That would be one way to do it, right? You would inject that, it would increase the funds available based on the Native populations of the state or however you wanted to do it, kind of what they have in the formula funds. But then, you'd want also some qualifiers about which institutions were able to get it. So, I hope that kind of helps on that. Leslie, did I misspeak on any of that?

Leslie Wheelock: I don't know. I find this really confusing without having paperwork in front of me [cross-talking].

Trent Teegerstrom: Me, too. I should. I do -- yeah, you guys, I know you have been here a long time now.

Sarah Vogel: It's just for quite a while, we were thinking, how can we help the FRTEP program. Basically, the answer that came back is that because it was a problem with the way the laws were written, USDA, the folks at OTR and so on, couldn't change that, unless Congress changed the law. So, my understanding is that there was language that could be changed so that there could be a way where we wouldn't have this annual competition. If there are more programs, it wouldn't be out of this, you know, the smaller sizes of the pie, rather get a bigger pie. I'm not sure I understand that and it certainly doesn't seem like anyone from Congress has picked up the ball and run with it.

Trent Teegerstrom: No. Because it's such a relatively small program and it's kind of in the middle and it gets mixed up with the 1994 and gets mixed up with some other, where they say, well, look at all these extension tribal agents we have out there, because some of the departments and some of the tribes have extension agents, too. And they say, well, gosh, you guys have a ton of agents out there. Why are we funding this little sliver in here for? Maybe we ought to just combine them all. But they're very different in how they function and what they do. They're complimentary to one another. And they extend beyond where there's not a 1994, maybe it doesn't have the reach at least at this point. Then, 1862 FRTEPs can reach in and help

that one to foster the relationship on there. So there's a lot synergy that we could do on that.

From talking to Ross and to Joe Hiller, who had my position before, that kind of started some of that, it was when they arbitrarily moved that. But the original language that created the EIRP and the FRTEP position, the monies were in a separate, different place that was non-competitive. When Congress was doing another Farm Bill, they just moved it. It just got picked up because it's a small one and just arbitrarily moved it over to this other one. But I think the language still sits in the other one.

Leslie Wheelock: I think of those, too. For clarification, the competition, the requirement to re-compete for the funding is every two years?

Trent Teegerstrom: Four.

Leslie Wheelock: Four years.

Trent Teegerstrom: Four, yeah. And this year, they're opening the whole thing up again. But they only list 1862s and 1890s on this one, which was kind of odd. Why, if you're going to open it all the way up, then you would put the 1994s on there, but that wasn't the case. I'm not sure how the 1890s got in there. We've been fighting to keep it closed at least for another year until we can continue to try and straighten this out.

Leslie Wheelock: The 1890s are the historically black colleges and universities.

Sarah Vogel: You mean the 1890s?

Trent Teegerstrom: The 1890s, yeah. So, if we can keep it closed then we can continue to work on fixing the programs and I can fix that. But the way they're writing it right now, it comes out I think mid-February, so I've got a very short time and we're trying to convince them to go back to the way it was in at least 2013, 2014. If I can do that, then we can hold it off for a little bit because there's not a new injection of money coming in. I haven't seen it. That was pulled out. But that \$5 million had been proposed ever since I could remember and it's never, never materialized. Actually, we went down that one-year sequestration, we're just now getting back to where we were back in 2010. Thanks.

Leslie Wheelock: Thank you. Thank you, Trent.

Trent Teegerstrom: Thank you. Thanks for having me here.

Josiah Griffin: This is Josiah. It has come to our attention that due to travel, more people are leaving than we initially anticipated. So we would like to propose to move the agenda around a little bit to make sure that tomorrow is as productive as possible. As a reminder, to maintain quorum for this meeting, we need at least eight individuals. So what we would like to propose is to move the elections to today if

everyone is amenable to that suggestion. By election, I mean the election for the chair and vice chair that was previously scheduled for tomorrow morning.

Leslie Wheelock: By the way, we have calculated and we will have eight people here through the end of tomorrow, just eight, so by the skin of our teeth. But we did want everybody to be able to participate in this. We were missing some people.

Sarah Vogel: Let me ask, how do you get to be eight tomorrow, do you know?

Leslie Wheelock: I have Angela, who is in a board meeting right now, Angela, Erin, Gilbert, Mark, Roselynn, Sherry, Mark Rose - sorry I wasn't clear there - and myself. That's as of 2:30 when Sarah and Tawney leave. Sarah and Tawney are with us until 2:30. Okay?

Josiah Griffin: Does anyone have any objection to that shift? Okay. So, the council charter does allow for a chair and the vice chair. That chair is expected to lead council meetings in a fair, balanced, and focused way. So at this time, I would like to open it up for nominations, for individuals to serve on the council after nominations for both the chair and the vice chair. We will proceed with a vote on a blind ballot system. Connie Holman will provide a brief overview of USDA's work with Land Tenure. And after that Land Tenure discussion,

we should have the announcements for who will be assuming the council leadership for the 2016 to 2018 term. Yes, ma'am?

Female Voice: Who are your current chair and vice chair?

Josiah Griffin: The chair for the 2014 to 2016 council membership term was Mr. Mark Wadsworth. He was actually chair for the past two council terms, that's four years. The vice chair was Porter Holder from Choctaw Nation, who is no longer with the council. Do we have any nominations to serve as chair?

Leslie Wheelock: Feel free to nominate yourself.

Tawney Brunsch: This is Tawney. I'd like to nominate Mark again for chairman.

Sarah Vogel: I'll second.

Mark Wadsworth: And if I could say, too, it's an honor and it's work, too, believe me, it is. And if there is somebody else that really wants to commit to this, too, I do not want to be put in a position that I be -- nobody else wanting to go for it. How do you say that?

Josiah Griffin: So is there anyone else who respectfully would be entrusted in putting their hat in the ring?

Male Voice: I close the nominations.

Josiah Griffin: Do I have a second?

Male Voice: I second.

Josiah Griffin: Okay. So we have one nominee for the chair. Is there anyone who would be interested in nominating either themselves or someone else to serve as the vice chair?

Sarah Vogel: I'd like to nominate Tawney for vice chair.

Josiah Griffin: Okay.

Male Voice: I second.

Josiah Griffin: And Tawney?

Tawney Brunsch: No. I think that would be great, honestly. I feel like we've got, like I said earlier, I guess I really like their recommendations that we've got to move forward with. And it feels like we're just getting the wheels underneath this. So, I'm very anxious to move ahead. And I think, Mark and I together, honestly, and especially with the new people that we've got on, with a lot of support, I'm very confident that we could get through a lot this year.

Josiah Griffin: Anything else? So, respectfully, is there anyone else who would also like to be nominated or nominate another for vice chair?

Erin Parker: This is Erin. I'm motioning to close the nominations.

Josiah Griffin: Do I have a second?

Leslie Wheelock: I second.

Josiah Griffin: So approved. For the 2016 to 2018 council membership term, Mark Wadsworth will once again serve as chair.

Thank you, Mark. And Tawney Brunsch will be stepping in as the vice chair.

Leslie Wheelock: Congratulations. And we have another presentation, a quick presentation before we go into our working session because Connie has to drive across the country in the snow.

Connie Holman: And I'll make it very quick. This is Connie Holman with the Farm Service Agency. The other PowerPoint that I passed out earlier today that's entitled "USDA Land Tenure Update," if you would refer to the second page just a little bit of background on Land Tenure.

The Advisory Committee for the Beginning Farmers and Ranchers was established in 1998. Without reading it, you'll see there through that middle part of the page, the things that that committee advises the secretary on. The secretary set up a subcommittee on Land Tenure within the Advisory Committee on Beginning of Farmers and Ranchers to undertake a longer term, examination of Land Tenure issues, and the future of American agriculture. If you will refer in your binder to Tab 10, it folds out. There is a spreadsheet there that's several pages long.

Leslie Wheelock: Some of these fold out backwards. Some of these we were helped by [indiscernible]. Some of these

you'll have to flip over and fold them out and some of them will fold [cross-talking].

Connie Holman: And it's something that you would want to study at your leisure, when you get back to your room, homework maybe. There are several recommendations that the committee came up with. I know that part of you are familiar with Chris Beyerhelm, who was the deputy administrator for Farm Loan Programs for about five or six years.

Sarah Vogel: He was on this council for four years.

Connie Holman: And he is now associate administrator for administrative issues for the Farm Service Agency. He chaired this Land Tenure Committee. Like I said, there are several pages there, and there is a wide variety of recommendations that that committee made. Some of those are recommendations that would require literally acts of Congress. There are some recommendations that included other agencies such as the Internal Revenue. And those are in various degrees of completion or study. Again, I encourage you to look at those. If you'll notice, there are several of those that Mr. Jim Radintz, who I'm sitting in for, is the point of contact on.

The committee, the task force, realizes the importance of land tenure and the issues that, not only for the Native American community, but in addition for some of the African

American communities, fractionation and the issues that face minorities in general.

There are some of those recommendations that we've done more work on than others. Some of those have been completed and I think Leslie has included the latest update on that. Also, the PowerPoint, the last two to three slides talk about the USDA accomplishments. One of those is the Highly Fractionated Indian Land. One of them is Direct Ownership Microloans, which as I've mentioned earlier, we haven't been able to implement both of those programs. It talks a little bit about the events that the Land Tenure Committee have held or participated in to get feedback. And it also talks about some ongoing efforts. I will be happy to take any questions, but again, it's a whole lot of information to absorb. I suggest, looking at it and we will keep Leslie and Josiah and the staff updated, and hopefully, we would be able to accomplish some additional items going forward.

I'm sure there are some that's mighty big bite to chew, but you got to start somewhere, right? And that's kind of what this committee has attempted to do, is start to address some of these long going issues so it stands to reason they're not going to be fixed in a short period of time. So, I'll be happy to entertain any questions, if not, I'll entertain anything afterwards.

Tawney Brunsch: Connie?

Connie Holman: Yes, Tawney?

Tawney Brunsch: Connie, I'm just wondering if you've already communicated to the tribes, then described more about the Highly Fractionated Indian Land Loan Program and the Direct Ownership Microloan Program. Do you work directly with tribes to educate them about how those programs work?

Connie Holman: We in the national office work with our states and our states work with the tribes. Montana, the state of Montana, Jennifer Cole and Bruce Nelson have done an extremely good job in Montana. Some states don't do as well as others. Since the national office handles those Highly Fractionated Land Loan Program funds, we do all of that in the national office. We've done a lot of outreach through Leslie and her staff on that program particularly.

Tawney Brunsch: Okay. So, do you know what kind of outreach efforts have been conducted to educate the tribes?

Leslie Wheelock: We typically take materials with us to conferences and talk to tribal leaders at the conferences to the extent that the program went out in the packages or the information available. They were in our newsletters. And the newsletter goes to all the tribal leaders. There has not been a direct one-pager kind of thing to tribal leadership.

Tawney Brunsch: Okay. So, I would just ask, I guess, it's always hopeful if I understand it just because I have lots of opportunities to interact with different tribal programs,

agencies, and stuff, even next week, right, at our big Lakota Nation Invitational tournament. So whatever resources you have, if there's something available online or whatever where I can study and ask questions before then?

Connie Holman: Well, I will say this, that program did not get -- even though a lot of the information didn't come out on that until just recently because even though it was announced in December of last year, there was a lot of stuff still left in the beginning stages because it was going to be handled all out of the national office. When Mr. Scuse announced the recipient of the first award, the first loan, then they put a lot of that information out. I remember seeing probably, Wednesday of this week I think, the fact sheet and stuff like that. So I can get you that information because it's just hot off of the presses.

Leslie Wheelock: I saw the preliminaries, Friday.

Connie Holman: Do you remember when Mr. Scuse spoke? What day that was?

Leslie Wheelock: Tuesday.

Connie Holman: Tuesday. It came out Tuesday afternoon because they're very careful not to put that information out to the public before it's officially announced. And it was officially announced. So I will make sure that you get that information.

Leslie Wheelock: There was a press release and some other. I have like six attachments.

Connie Holman: Okay. Yeah. Fact sheets and some of that kind of stuff, that's just gotten out. And so we'll do more on that.

Leslie Wheelock: Prior to that, I mean what we were talking about was the Farm Bill language and what was coming. We didn't have a program put together to actually present to people that was constantly talking about, talking about, talking about - boom - we have a program.

Sarah Vogel: What's the uptake on this? Is there a lot of interest?

Leslie Wheelock: You have to answer that. I know that we have money out of the door, but --

Connie Holman: And you know at one time they said there wouldn't be that much interest because of the Cobell Settlement and the money that came with the Cobell Settlement to do the same type of thing. However, now that it's out there, we're getting more questions, so I think there's going to be more interest than we really anticipated that there would be. Like I said, we got that out. We've already got an applicant who said they're going to apply for the next \$10 million for 2017, the 2017 money. So I think there's going to be more interest than we anticipated.

Sarah Vogel: By the way, circling back earlier when this program was discussed. It was authorized in 2008, but then it had barriers in it, so it was fixed in 2014 [sounds like]. But there was \$1 million, I was wondering, that \$1 million a year, was that enough?

Connie Holman: No. It was \$10 million and we lost it September 30th.

Leslie Wheelock: Every year, except last year.

Sarah Vogel: Okay. So, it will be \$10 million this coming year? So that could be gone in June [sounds like]?

Connie Holman: Yes. That is correct.

Sarah Vogel: Is there a re-lending program or is it like a --

Leslie Wheelock: Is it a rotating loan or is it a one-shot deal?

Connie Holman: It's a one-shot deal. It's appropriated funds. So we're appropriated \$10 million.

Sarah Vogel: And you give it away or you lend it?

Connie Holman: We lend it and they in turn re-lend it. Now, there is a little hiccup that might play into that, and I'm not exactly sure if we're on a continuing resolution, whether we'll have access to all \$10 million of those dollars in January or not, but we'll make that work.

Sarah Vogel: And the \$10 million went to the gentleman,
the Blackfoot --

Connie Holman: That is correct.

Sarah Vogel: At least to the Blackfoot [phonetic].

Female Voice: Yeah, it was definitely one of the
[indiscernible].

Sarah Vogel: And then next year it could go -- so if there
is interest, if people are inquiring for the coming up fiscal
year --

Leslie Wheelock: For this fiscal year, Fiscal Year 2017.

Connie Holman: Correct, right.

Mark Wadsworth: Well, this is, if [indiscernible] for
instance there is a tribe out there that basically appropriated
through the Cobell \$36 million, yet when they set out for --
bought purchases of fractionated acreage, the amount of
[inaudible] was small. There was a shortfall.

Connie Holman: And here's another thing. We also have
ITLAP money. Indian Tribal Land Acquisition Program money that
is available, that we have been not using for the last ten years
or so. Now, it's not that much. It's about \$2 million I think
each year. But every year, we send it back because we don't
have a tribe apply for it and they can do the same thing with
it. The only thing this program allowed individuals to be
interested in the ITLAP program. It was required for tribes.

There has been some suggestion that maybe we ought to turn the ITLAP program into a re-lending program as well. So that might be something that we'd look at doing. There has been some suggestion that they might look at doing something like that in the new Farm Bill.

Sarah Vogel: This is a different question, but as long as you're here. I think it was about 1990 that the Farm Bill said that if there were foreclosures and so forth of trust land, that if it were reacquired by FSA, that there had to be a first option to the tribe to purchase it to keep it under tribal member control. Is that law still there?

Connie Holman: I don't know that the law is still there. But I know that that is what we look at doing. I don't know whether that law is there that forces us to do that or we do that as good stewards of the land. But we still do that.

Leslie Wheelock: Yup. There was one hiccup about the time I arrived and I think that kind of reiterated that we do still do that, right?

Sarah Vogel: I think that's, basically, a really good thing to keep in mind. I don't recall if there's a requirement that the tribe be contacted when land like that goes into foreclosure.

Leslie Wheelock: Connie, excuse me, I'm just going to jump in here. That is something that we probably ought to check it down in black and white and double verify before January 20th.

Connie Holman: I'll make sure. And with the projected state of the ag economy, that probably wouldn't be a bad thing to check on anyway. So, I'll go back and talk with my counterpart.

Sarah Vogel: Great, great. I believe with that land, if you get it back in -- I hope you don't get any land back, but if you do, I think the tribes used to have a fairly decent repayment program so that it was affordable -- and so with the acquired lands. There used to be in the '80s, there was a lot of it. I hope not. But I'm afraid. And actually, the debt forgiveness in Keepseagle may have prevented some of that land from going under. We shall see.

Leslie Wheelock: Thank you, Connie.

Connie Holman: Thank you.

Leslie Wheelock: Mr. Chairman -- oh, Sarah?

Sarah Vogel: When you do this guide, I hope a lot of the programs that were devised about deferral and re-amortizing using [sounds like] that, you know, the whole panoply of debt procedures that were developed in the '80s to try to keep people on the land. I hope from the '80s and from the [indiscernible],

I hope that they are up front and center, and mentioned in your book, or you do a new book.

Connie Holman: The plain language guide. We are doing one that specifically focuses on servicing options. Once you become a borrower, that is already out there. It talks about becoming an applicant and going through it. And the one that talks about the options, the servicing option is very good. I think, Leslie, you've seen it probably. It's very good. It's very comprehensive.

Sarah Vogel: The other plain language guide was sent to us as a class council before it was printed. I must say we had a lot of comments and most of which were taken and Chris and those guys were glad we did comment. I think there are people out there, if you want a review confidentially, whatever, people are agreeable to do.

Leslie Wheelock: Thank you. Mr. Chairman.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes. I'm lucky to have the agenda. I guess we're on item number 8, the working session. You referred to the secretary's reply as in the works. Is that correct?

Josiah Griffin: Yes, sir, that's correct.

Mark Wadsworth: He pretty went over all of our previous recommendations. Are there any more questions about those that we didn't cover? I think everyone is kind of satisfied that we ended up, but we can always address to begin [indiscernible].

It basically brings us up to the discussed council rules for the 2016-18 period. When you brought this up, was that -- what were your concepts? Was it just open discussion or --?

Josiah Griffin: We've mentioned earlier today that the secretary reestablished the council voluntarily. So at this point we have a two-year period to really do a deep dive on issues. We are currently unaware, as I think Deputy Secretary Scuse mentioned, of who the next agriculture secretary will be. So we do not yet know what the intake will be either way about reestablishing the council. So the hope of including the discussed council goals for 2016 to 2018 membership piece was to allow time for you to really do a deep dive on the high level priorities that you feel are accomplishable and measurable within this two-year period.

Leslie Wheelock: If I may Mr. Chairman, the other thing, too, this is usually the time that we used to talk about potential additional recommendations to the secretary. At the end of the day tomorrow, we will have fewer people here than at the end of the day right now. So if there are things that we could talk about now this would be ideal. Thank you, sir.

Mark Wadsworth: That was a suggestion. Yes, Tawney?

Tawney Brunsch: I'm just wondering. It feels like we have a lot of recommendations and some of them -- I'm just going through them a little bit today. Even though they say that

they've been completed, we've identified at least a couple that should still be in an ongoing status or whatever. So would it make sense to really carefully review this and make sure that we have everything identified that needs to stay on our radar as not completed, as ongoing, and then prioritize what we've already recommended? I mean do you guys feel like it's beneficial to keep adding recommendations when we really haven't even had a good response on what we recommended in September? So does it make sense to keep adding to the list, or should we just focus especially just in a short amount of time on the recommendations that we've already made and really prioritize those and even like number them? What is our number one or identified top five or so because there are so many? I don't know.

Mark Wadsworth: Any other comment?

Leslie Wheelock: Mr. Chairman, this is Leslie. Internally, additional recommendations may not make it through the system in the next fortyish days, and so what we may want to do is, from our perspective push on getting the ones done. We already have people pushing us to get them done to get the secretary to sign them. But it may make sense to figure out the priorities as well.

Female Voice: We have a question here.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes.

Sherry Crutcher: Mr. Chairman, just an issue. I wanted to add to Angel and I forget the girl from Alaska's name, where they were talking about with NRCS as far as the rural area - with the secluded area.

Male Voice: Oh, okay, rural.

Sherry Crutcher: Yeah, rural. I can't even say it, secluded area.

Male Voice: That's better.

Sherry Crutcher: They were talking about the cost. That was one of the issues that I wanted to bring up - it was the cost to the secluded areas because we, in our area, we're a hundred miles from nowhere. That was one that I wanted to see about putting on priority, some way, somehow, with them or with everybody in the secluded areas because the cost is like three times what the rates are now, and for people to be involved with EQIP or anything to do with helping themselves, it's not cost efficient.

For example, and I'll just use a quick example, I'll use my program with the EQIP. The EQIP was allowing me \$13,000 to put in a pipe system on my land. Not paying attention, not working with - checking it out, leaving it up to NRCS to put the plan together for me with the cost that they put in together. Well, come down right down to the end. They were going to allocate me \$13,000. Just to bring the pipe to Owyhee, Nevada was \$15,000.

Sarah Vogel: Not put it in the ground.

Sherry Crutcher: That's just bringing it to the [indiscernible], I mean.

Leslie Wheelock: Rolling it off the truck.

Sherry Crutcher: We had rolled it off the truck, and then we had to do everything else. That's just one example of -- there was, oh, I would say eight to ten people that were involved in in this, so we started putting caution, red flags out there because I had to pay \$11,000 out of my own pocket to finish a 30-acre, 600 feet of pipe to put in while I already put my bill there. I mean I had no choice but to pay the irrigation company that was going to deliver it to me. I already signed the document. I had no choice. I was going to put myself under. So I had to come up with \$11,000.

So I can just imagine what Alaska is looking at. And our whole goal here is to get our people to get involved in that because it is an awesome program. And now with our settlement money, our area has the money but if an individual wants to do something on their own, we're tying their hands.

So with that issue, I would like to request some way, somehow to look into the secluded areas with NRCS because those programs are awesome. They really are, and they really can benefit a lot of people to put their land back in production or to like the Arizona, the Navajo Nation was saying, it's there.

But because they're so secluded, the rates aren't even going to help them at all. Ninety percent of them may not be able to come up with that kind of money. And if they leave the trust with NRCS to do the paperwork for them and don't do the research like I did, I was just fortunate enough I had a good year.

So that was one of the biggest issues that I could see and when they brought it up it's probably more so for them, and Navajo Nation because it is out there. They are out there so far, and you know if they want to get their lands back into production, this is the way to do it. It's pipe and wells. It cost me \$9,000 to put a well on my place. But I don't know how much it would cost Navajo Nation. But if they can get a well and solar out there, they can run water through pipes to get the things that they want to grow. So the program is really beneficial but we need to look at the cost big time.

Mark Rose: So a 30-second explanation of what we do, of payment schedules. We have an economist that will come up with an estimated cost, the typical cost of installment practice. And the payment schedule is developed on a regional [sounds like] basis. I will look and see where Alaska falls into that, or even like Hawaii as well as Puerto Rico. And then we have the issue of [indiscernible] working with the tribe.

Sherry Crutcher: But I'm in Nevada.

Mark Rose: Oh you're in Nevada.

Sherry Crutcher: I mean we're right here. You know?

Mark Rose: I'm sorry. So what we will do is look at these and I know Xavier Montoya in New Mexico has brought this to our attention as well. We need to be able to have those flexibilities cover those extra costs in these secluded areas. We can look at it that right now.

Sherry Crutcher: Yeah, and with that though, going through the procedures from the individual to the county committee to the state committee, going through the procedures, it never went anywhere. It never went anywhere.

Leslie Wheelock: Mr. Chairman.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes?

Leslie Wheelock: Since our Alaska representative isn't here, the additional challenge for Alaska is what do you do for off-the-road spaces? So, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Nevada all have road systems. Most towns and villages and cities are on the road systems; and Alaska, they're not necessarily. That drives the cost of transportation up as well.

Male Voice: And then we actually got a picture of a high building trucked in with a snow [indiscernible].

Sherry Crutcher: And you watch *Ice Roads Truckers* now.

Male Voice: All the time.

Sherry Crutcher: They wait for that to freeze and they get them there.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, Sarah?

Sarah Vogel: I think that's [indiscernible] we can add more, and I also like Connie's idea about reviewing this long list and narrowing our focus and deciding on priorities.

Sherry Crutcher: I will make the motion. Do we need to make a motion on this, Mr. Chairman?

Mark Wadsworth: Yes. Erin, did you --

Erin Parker: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for indulging a new person. I just have a couple of questions. What is the internal procedure, Leslie or anybody on the USDA side, for getting the secretary to sign those recommendations? I guess my concern is just we have a transition coming. Things are going to look different in some way and we have a lot of uncertainties surrounding what we're going to look like over the next couple of years. Since we're all here right now - I don't know - the future is uncertain and if we have a chance to formulate new priorities in addition to the recommendations we already have, I guess I'm just worried about missing an opportunity when we're here.

Leslie Wheelock: The typical process is the council makes the recommendations. We pull those recommendations out of the notes and write them up into a letter that is reviewed with the chairman of the council, and then sent to the secretary through the correspondence system. And then we write the response after

consulting with the different agencies and offices that are affected by the recommendation requests. That can take time because in some cases we're negotiating. Some people will read things one way and we have to go back and say, no, that's not what is meant. What is meant is not Y but A. So that process takes some time to muddle through.

However, the prioritization may not necessarily be a prioritization as much as a transition plan, or transition request, or something along the lines so that we can actually pick it up and drop it into our transition materials as an addendum. Our transition plan has been certified and is done but there have already been things that have happened this week that will require an addendum to our certified plan. So there is that possibility rather than establishing priorities say, get through the transition, or through the next two years, this is what we're expecting to see. We're expecting to see a Farm Bill does the following or whatever. But kind of think in terms of I need to get from now to March or April or May and thereafter. What do I want people working on during that time? There is a lot in here that career people can work on. You don't need the political in place. It helps. You don't need them.

Tawney Brunsch: Leslie, could you help us identify those people then because I think that would be super helpful. So we're not only going to identify what paths to prioritize then

but even assign them to the person that we know we need to follow up on.

Leslie Wheelock: We can try here. We're more likely to get that when we get back and can actually call Connie, and say, hey, Connie, who is the right person for this, that sort of thing. Call Mark and just make sure that we've got somebody identified.

Mark Wadsworth: Just for clarification, for Sherry's question, it needs to be answered, Mark. Do you think that you need a formal recommendation from the council to look into this?

Mark Rose: It probably would be good to document it, I think, for the council purposes, but no because I'm in charge of the stuff.

Sherry Crutcher: Can I have your phone number please?

[Cross-talking]

Mark Wadsworth: All right. Are you satisfied, Sherry?

Sherry Crutcher: I am. Thank you.

Mark Rose: Okay.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, Sarah?

Sarah Vogel: I just looked through the time it took to get the response back. As Leslie pointed out, of our various recommendations, it was four months, seven months, seven months, five months, and no response. So if we want to get Secretary Vilsack, who I do believe is going to be the most motivated

person in Washington, D.C. to help us, if we do we have recommendations or anything new, we can at least make a stab at trying to get him to say I really think this is what should happen, and then that would be supported. I mean, it may be something on the way, something like this. Yeah.

Sherry Crutcher: Mr. Chairman?

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, Sherry?

Sherry Crutcher: With that, with Sarah's recommendation, I would make a suggestion to write one more letter and put how long because like what you said seven months, because once you bring that to their attention, you are like -- they are going to be saying, hey, why are we putting this off? We should do something. I would like to make a recommendation that one more letter be written in regards to the request, past requests, and put a time frame on there. Would that be --

Sarah Vogel: This is how long it took to get a response which wasn't -- Leslie or Janie, or I guess is mostly -- sorry.

Leslie Wheelock: It was mostly me because we didn't start rolling on recommendations until we put together the subcommittees and stopped talking at it [sounds like].

Sarah Vogel: I don't think I a hundred percent like that process because it kind of makes me wonder the level of commitment to make these changes in a lot of the responses we've gotten back. I mean I'm just saying we've gotten responses.

But like some of these responses are a little bit on the vague side. So like I know a lot of requests we made, Chris was here at the table and said, done. Mark is at the table - done. It's like it took away a lot of our good recommendations because it was done, nothing to ask the secretary about. These are the tougher ones. I think we have occasionally felt kind of bad and it took so long to get back like a rather dismissive letter. So yes, we got a response but I personally don't think this is -- I mean it's Secretary Vilsack's name, but he's been a rock for this council. I don't know really. I'm just expressing concern but we have him for just a little bit a while, and if there is anything he can do, we should give him the chance.

Mark Wadsworth: Okay. I think that just looking at the first recommendation, the number of CNAFR meetings, just check it off whether we've gotten that wish, and we do have meetings per year. The second one should increase funding provided and for the increase in CNAFR meetings. Are we fully funded for the next meeting schedule that we're going to attend for this year, or we need to make a request on how that's going to go?

Josiah Griffin: So based on the FACA database, there is a Federal Advisory Committee database that is run by the General Services Administration. We have estimated that each meeting costs approximately \$35,000. The Farm Service Agency has provided the cost of one meeting every fiscal year, and they

have very graciously agreed to do the same. We are working on processing that funding arrangement so we will at least have funding for one additional meeting and we will continue to go hat in hand.

Female Voice: This - we have a carryover to take care of this one?

Josiah Griffin: Yes. For additional meetings or teleconferences as the council deems appropriate.

Mark Wadsworth: We'll be all right for this year?

Josiah Griffin: Yes, sir.

Mark Wadsworth: All right.

Sarah Vogel: Could I ask what you mean by this year?

Mark Wadsworth: The 2017 fiscal year.

Sarah Vogel: The '17 fiscal, okay.

Mark Wadsworth: When does your fiscal year end?

Josiah Griffin: The fiscal year is from October 1st through September 30th.

Sarah Vogel: Could I ask another question? Because I've certainly heard hints of this, is that the meetings in D.C. are less expensive than the meetings where we travel, where everybody travels. Like a meeting like today, everybody traveled. But if we had a meeting in D.C., then there would be far, fewer trips. So what is the difference between a D.C.

meeting and a travel meeting? I love the travel meetings but I'm wondering what the cost disparity is.

Leslie Wheelock: I'm trying to ballpark it in my head. I think it's at least half, and it may be even less. We don't have to pay for the facility. We still have to pay for the recorder. We don't have to pay for at least five people to travel. For the department, it's a lot less expensive. We don't get a lot of public comment at that event, as you know. And unless we fit during another meeting that's in D.C., that could be coordinated, although we already have the FDPIR group coming in with the National Congress of American Indians in February. So it has to be a different date. But that's the kind of thing to think about. If there is a Tribal Nations Conference, do we want to have it in coordination? Mind you that gives that [indiscernible] their option.

Sarah Vogel: This is a fabulous meeting because look at all the people we heard from today. They're from all over the country. We had that and other instances, so I think two out of town trips, I mean I think that's where the budgeting committee --

Josiah Griffin: So if I may provide some institutional or historical knowledge here, based on my work with John, it's been my understanding that when the council was first established there was one meeting in Washington, D.C. at the start of each

fiscal year. There was one meeting in Las Vegas, Nevada tailgating off of the Intertribal Agriculture Council Membership Conference. And there was one teleconference meeting. It was at the council's behest that we began looking at other alternatives to encourage more in-person meetings, and then to gather more in-person feedback also at the request of the Council. And we began looking at ways that we could meet on tribal lands, particularly those tribal lands of our council members.

So to the extent that we have the budget, to the extent that we have the staffing capacity, and Leslie, please feel free to cut me if I'm misstating here. But we have been doing what we can to make sure that the council's needs and requests have been met for that space.

Sarah Vogel: If there's money then that's good then.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, Sherry?

Sherry Crutcher: Just a quick question, just being new. I'm just trying to fill in the gaps, I guess. Just knowing and seeing all of the recommendations that have come through, and some of them still going on, does not having more meetings, is that might be a reason why things aren't getting done to an extent? I mean not --

Leslie Wheelock: Mr. Chairman. Not from our perspective. If we have more meetings that takes us away from getting people

tacked down on these different things that we're calling them about because we do all that work, too. This office arranges the meetings.

Sherry Crutcher: So what's going to happen when you two are gone?

Leslie Wheelock: We'll have Josiah plus one continuing to do the work.

Sherry Crutcher: Okay. I'm just curious because I just kind of wonder. A long gap is a long gap, and I'm like, oh, what could be done to bring that faster?

Mark Wadsworth: Yes Connie?

Connie Holman: Right. I think we can supplement the in-person meetings with maybe coordinating more or a schedule period for the subcommittees to meet, and maybe all of us, we've never done that to my knowledge or at least when I've been on the council, utilize just the phone conferences. Lakota Funds has a Polycom technology where we can even do kind of face-to-face type meetings using that technology. Erin, I know you've got that capacity, too, so it's just been my experience especially with the South Dakota Native Home Ownership Coalition. I can't believe that could be more of a mouthful.

We get a lot done because we are very strict about having our committee meetings every month, so a lot of the stuff. And especially if we get this work plan created, what we have

clearly defined activities, and follow up people assigned to them, that's the kind of stuff we could be following up on monthly. I think it might help you, too, or whoever in the capacity to push at the D.C. level where that is needed, I think that's probably going to get stuff done.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, Josiah?

Josiah Griffin: Mr. Chairman, I'm seeing a couple of blank looks. So if I may provide a little bit more context. So for any at-large meeting of the council, there is quite a bit of groundwork that we have to do. We have to submit the *Federal Register's* notice. We have to get the agenda. We have to have a public comment period. All of this has to be open and accessible to the public in some way.

As I mentioned at the start of this meeting, at the end of the last council term, there were three subcommittees that were established. Those three subcommittees have served as vehicles for council members to do a deeper dive on issues. These subcommittees, because they do not provide recommendations directly to the secretary, the only way that we can do that is at an at-large meeting. The subcommittee meetings are therefore closed to the public. Therefore, they can be hosted and run as quite a bit more frequently.

The other factor about a subcommittee is that subcommittees are able to invite advisors at any point in time. So we've had

representatives from the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis. We've had representatives from Federally Recognized Tribal Extension Programs. We've had USDA staff to help facilitate and answer any questions that council members might have. On the flipside, it has been an ongoing way of better informing USDA staff on deeper dive issues.

Mark Wadsworth: I think that pretty well answers number two. We got 40 more to go.

Sarah Vogel: We only have 40-something --

Mark Wadsworth: Okay. I think number three could be scratched off because that has been encompassed within the EQIP program and we've had responders to the third responses from that. NASS, pretty much I feel we made the recommendation and have it worked into that. Yes, Erin?

Erin Parker: Sorry. I know we have 40 items to get through. In the materials there is a little bit of a blurb about the Pacific Region of the IAC Technical Assistance Network that's doing exactly what this is. I would be comfortable scratching that one off because I know they are working with their regions. NASS folks actually puts subsistence into the current census. They can't reprogram the categories this year because they are too far along in the process. But they are looking at ways of capturing that information, working with tribal members to make sure that's understood. Hopefully, what

they want to do if it works is pilot it out to all of the regions so that everybody is able to do that. I think it's explained further in the materials that we got but I think it's enough to cross it off. Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, Leslie?

Leslie Wheelock: Erin, we need to get Angela wrapped into that because we've been working with her on subsistence, separately, and we've got two different tracks going on right now.

Erin Parker: Okay. Yeah, we can talk later but --

Mark Wadsworth: So that's a keeper or --?

Erin Parker: I would keep it.

Mark Wadsworth: Okay. Item number five can be scratched off. Number six, these are about the lending CDFIs. Connie, if you would like to? Are you satisfied? We could go one-by-one on this in private [sounds like], or Sarah too? You've been both working at the FSA [phonetic].

Sarah Vogel: Are we talking about the micro project?

Mark Wadsworth: Yeah, the micro project, number six.

Sarah Vogel: I think there's been a call for micro projects at all of the different USDA agencies, Rural Development. I think FSA has done micro projects, they are the leader. But NRCS, I think they still desire for low-cost, low paperwork, quicker projects that are small.

Leslie Wheelock: Mini projects.

Sarah Vogel: Mini projects, and so I'd keep this --

Tawney Brunsch: Knowing that we would focus maybe more just on the NRCS piece.

Sarah Vogel: I think so. Yeah, I think the NRCS will be the big one.

Leslie Wheelock: We'll call this the Gilbert.

Mark Wadsworth: Yeah, the Gilbert recommendation.

Sarah Vogel: Gilbert Harrison memorial.

Mark Wadsworth: We hear about it every meeting. How about number seven?

Tawney Brunsch: Yeah, I think it's continued engagement, honestly, but I'm just wondering if we would need to condense some of these because this in my mind seems very similar. But I guess we shouldn't muddy it up in us continuing to try to coordinate efforts and partner with [indiscernible] Indian Country development too. Whatever that is, fortyish, whatever.

Sarah Vogel: But I think, too, that for example, CDFIs becoming guaranteed lenders. CDFIs to this more, more, better, better, more, more, better, better and so it takes some effort to keep it on, I think.

Connie Holman: Yeah. This is Connie. I'd say we've got the opportunity out there, but I think it falls to us now to advertise the availability, work with CDFIs to get on the list.

So I think although we've started it, and we're maybe kind of midstream, I think we got to finish hard. So I'd suggest leaving it on.

Mark Wadsworth: Number eight.

Sarah Vogel: I couldn't understand [sounds like] the seventh.

Female Voice: Uh-huh, yeah.

Mark Wadsworth: I've got nine.

Sarah Vogel: I think that could be like work at the hip with the Center for Indian Country Development, the Minneapolis Fed, because if they can move the banks, oh my god, that would be big.

Mark Wadsworth: So what I'm hearing is that seven and eight are kind of together. We should try to put them together?

Tawney Brunsch: Nine goes with whatever number that is.

Mark Wadsworth: Anybody find what nine goes with?

Josiah Griffin: I believe nine goes with forty.

Female Voice: Yup.

Sarah Vogel: Yup.

Mark Wadsworth: Combine nine and forty.

Sarah Vogel: If I could provide a little historical, I think that was one of the first recommendations of the first Credit Desert Subcommittee. We asked the secretary to use his personal clout to go out and talk to all of the lenders, convene

a high level lender conference with the Farm Credit System. The credit union this or that, and basically say you got these credit deserts. Let's work on it. Let's develop a strategy.

The response was basically this would go over to the White House, the big White House initiative on Indian Country, and it will be handled from that. But basically we have too many task forces. We have too many this and that, and it could be done better from another platform which kind of ended it. But I think the right platform is the Minneapolis Fed. This is what they do. So if USDA works closely with the Minneapolis Fed, and allies with them, that could be powerful.

Mark Wadsworth: All right. I think that this broadcasting when we enter [sounds like] from the line of questioning on it, we pretty well think that that pilot project is going through here so we should see some results on that. We should keep it open or wrap it up?

Josiah Griffin: I defer to the council on that.

Mark Wadsworth: Wait until we see what it's up?

Sarah Vogel: Yeah. Let's wait. Keep it.

Mark Wadsworth: Okay. Then number 11.

Tawney Brunsch: Keep it. I think we can keep it open as we discussed earlier. My notes were that Connie was going to share some of the dates in advance for 2017.

Mark Wadsworth: Okay. Item 12.

Sarah Vogel: That's the same thing as the Minneapolis Fed.
I think.

Mark Wadsworth: Nine, 40 and 12 should all be together?

Female Voice: Nine, 40, and 12.

Mark Wadsworth: Yeah, if I understood it correctly. Yeah.
Thirteen.

Sherry Crutcher: Not seen [sounds like] in the House or
Senate yet?

Female Voice: It's been asked for.

Leslie Wheelock: Yeah. It's been requested. It's just
not in the -- what's coming out of Congress. It's not being
approved by them.

Mark Wadsworth: It basically takes congressional action?

Leslie Wheelock: I think it's a continued pursuit. But we
really do need to change the language. The secretary should be
able to proceed [sounds like].

Mark Wadsworth: So 13 and 14, keep on going?

Sarah Vogel: Yeah.

Mark Wadsworth: Secretary should have Pathways and other
programs for tribal students. Mark, you have mentioned you
have --

Mark Rose: Yeah, we have a request [sounds like] for the
Pathways Program, overall targeting it at the minority
populations.

Leslie Wheelock: Mr. Chairman?

Mark Wadsworth: Yes.

Leslie Wheelock: The report that I got today, USDA has confirmed multiple USDA Pathways onsite application accepted events [sounds like] in the spring in partnership with several 1994 tribal colleges and universities. So far, we have one at Crownpoint, New Mexico with APHIS and AMS leading. We have one on Mahnomon, Minnesota with NRCS leading wider, and we have one at CP with APHIS and AMS leading.

Mark Wadsworth: Sounds like it took off. Cross that one off. Number 16? We pretty much claim the same situation. And then 17?

Leslie Wheelock: Mr. Chairman, within USDA we don't have authorization for Indian preference hiring. Actually, that was a different meeting. So I mean we literally have to ask the right questions and verify in order to make sure that we're getting tribal individuals. The other problem that we have had in the past is that our tribal youth are not checking this box for whatever reason. We can all imagine what those reasons are. They are not identifying themselves to the federal government, whereas the federal government is looking for them. That's difficult, to get that message across. But this, you can ask for it but until Congress gives us authority for it, it's not going to happen.

Mark Wadsworth: All right. I went ahead and just marked them off as completed. Eighteen - Forest Service, tribal land, base property, still got to keep this open I believe. Nineteen keep open. The Forest Service should develop guidance on the best practices for handling grazing in Indian country. Yes, Sherry?

Sherry Crutcher: The next three all seem to go together. Can I move that we just keep open 28, 21 and 22?

Mark Wadsworth: Okay. Anybody opposed? Any more discussion? The water one is done on 23, cross that off. Twenty-four?

Leslie Wheelock: Can't do.

Mark Wadsworth: Can't do. Then I have to -- reestablish CNAFR indefinitely. We've done as much as we can for this current two-year period, and it will be up to the next administration whether it goes on farther [sounds like]. Cross that hurdle when we get to the end of this trip I guess. Standard partnership with intertribal systems. I don't know exactly what partnership is but they always do presentations to the council and always update us with it, so what we're looking at or --

Leslie Wheelock: The flipside of this is the cooperative agreement that we operate. But I don't know what would be extended in that beyond making sure that they get another one

and continue to get them and that their funding gets increased. Because their funding has been flat as has ours for the last four to five years to the point where they can't. There are two problems. They can't hire people for longer than a year at a time, so they can't give people job assurance. They don't have anybody in Alaska right now, and they are leery of hiring somebody in Alaska when that's all they could give them and it cost so much to have those folks up there.

Mark Wadsworth: I think -- I honestly made some obligation during that [indiscernible] to get to do some stuff this late evening. So I think it has been a long enough day for right now. We can go through the rest tomorrow. Anybody agreeable, they can make a motion to adjourn.

Tawney Brunsch: I'll make a motion to adjourn. I think we did really good. I would start with another language if I wasn't being recorded.

Josiah Griffin: We have a motion on this --

Mark Wadsworth: It's seconded by Mark Rose.

Mark Rose: Second.

Mark Wadsworth: All those in favor, raise your hand? Any opposed, raise your hand. Motion carried. See you tomorrow.

[Cross-talking]

Sarah Vogel: Can we just come earlier tomorrow? Is that a possibility?

Josiah Griffin: Yes. So tomorrow, we have the agenda starting at 8:30.

Female Voice: We start early.

Josiah Griffin: Yes. So the contract with him was the start of the agenda. So we should be good to go there.

Leslie Wheelock: So we need to start at the time it's scheduled. We can't start earlier.

Male Voice: We start at 8:00.

Josiah Griffin: He says yes. There is an agreement.

Sarah Vogel: That would give us an extra half hour.

Sherry Crutcher: Plus, we did the chairman and the vice chairman so that's taken off --

Josiah Griffin: So six, then let's be adjourned [cross-talking]. Happy [sounds-like] arrives here at 8:15.

Mark Wadsworth: See you at 8:00 in the morning then.

Female Voice: Yeah, bring coffee.

Tawney Brunsch: Yeah. There's no coffee in the room anyway. I had to like to get ready and get out of the room by 6:00, so no coffee in the room.

Mark Wadsworth: No coffee tomorrow?

Josiah Griffin: We will have coffee in the room tomorrow at 8:15.

Female Voice: I bought some now.

Sarah Vogel: Is it this room again?

Josiah Griffin: Yes.

Sarah Vogel: Okay. Keep going. I can manage until 8:15,
no longer.

Erin Parker: Can we leave our binders or should we take
everything?

Leslie Wheelock: Yeah. We collect binders before with
[cross-talking]. Just make sure you take anything of value.

Erin Parker: Wait. This isn't of value. [Cross-talking]

Leslie Wheelock: Anything that can't be replaced.

Erin Parker: I know a lot of work went into it, so I'm
taking it.

Leslie Wheelock: A lot of love and care.

[End of file]

[End of transcript]