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Mark Wadsworth: Just a comment from the recorder of the meeting. When you touch the button, make sure the red light comes on before you speak and then the recording will come through. If you kind of speak away, it really picks up your voice quite well. Only three microphones at a time can be on. So once you're finished, if you'd just shut the button off and that will turn off your speaker. That's just a brief summation of how to use the recording system here.

Then we'll start going into our roll call. This is Wednesday, March 25th, 2015, quarterly meeting for the USDA Council for Native American Farming and Ranching. I'll start out with the roll call. Porter Holder.

Porter Holder: Here.

Mark Wadsworth: John Berrey. John Berrey is not here. Tawney Brunsch. Tawney Brunsch is not here. Gilbert Harrison.

Gilbert Harrison: Here.

Mark Wadsworth: Derrick Lente.

Derrick Lente: Present.

Mark Wadsworth: Jerry McPeak.

Jerry McPeak: Here.

Mark Wadsworth: Angela Peter.

Angela Peter: Here.

Mark Wadsworth: Edward Soza. Edward Soza is not here.

Mary Thompson. Mary Thompson is not here. Sarah Vogel.

Sarah Vogel: Here. And I'm sorry I missed the last meeting. It was due to a death in the family.

Mark Wadsworth: Okay. Chris Beyerhelm. Chris Beyerhelm is not here. Jim Radintz?

Jim Radintz: Here. Mr. Beyerhelm will be here tomorrow.

Mark Wadsworth: Also Leslie Wheelock.

Leslie Wheelock: Here.

Mark Wadsworth: And Carl-Martin Ruiz.

Carl-Martin Ruiz: Here. I'm sitting in for Dr. Leonard.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes. Thank you. Roll call has been given. We do have a quorum. Gilbert Harrison said he would do the blessing for us this afternoon, so if we can all stand.

Gilbert Harrison: We'll remove our hats, please. Lord, we come before you on this beautiful spring day here in Oklahoma City. We hope to have a very good productive meeting in the next couple of days. We pray that you help us and guide our thoughts in the right direction. May we make those recommendations and decisions that are in the best interest of our Native American farmers and ranchers. *Hozho na'ha' lii, Hozho na'ha' lii, Hozho na'ha' lii, Hozho na'ha' lii.* Amen.

Mark Wadsworth: Thank you, Gilbert. As a side note, we will be starting our public comment period in ten minutes. We have to stick to that. It is part of the CFR announcement, so we'll be starting that in ten minutes. We'll quickly go through. We encourage anybody in the audience if you do have any concerns, questions during the public comment period. We appreciate if you'd come up and just address the council. We appreciate any comments that we do get, and we do take actions on those as appropriately in our response.

John Lowery I guess would like to go over the review of the agenda and the meeting materials.

John Lowery: Thank you, Mark. For the council, I just wanted to go over the materials that are in your binder. At this time you do have the agenda for tab 1. On tab 2 you have the Office of Tribal Relations reports for January and February 2015. On tab 3 is a follow-up report from the Bureau of Indian Affairs which Kathryn Clause will provide to us. Number 4 is the Farm Service Agency youth loan fact sheet. Number 5 is Reaching Out to Native American Youth in Kansas. This is a blog post by the U.S. Office of Personnel and Management director Katherine Archuleta. Tab 6 is the updated CNAFR recommendations list. Number 7 is the CNAFR January 2015 letter to Secretary Vilsack. Tab 8 is the press release. USDA just announced \$97 million available to expand access to healthy food and to

support rural economies. Number 9 is an upcoming Council for Native American Farmer and Rancher meeting dates. Number 10 is the calendars to decide when the next subcommittee meeting will be taking place, and also a list of subcommittee memberships. Number 11 is templates for recommendations. Number 12 is the Federal Registry Notice for this meeting. Number 13 is maps. Of course we always provide maps for council members.

And then also on the very back sleeve we put some note paper in there for you. We also put the Save the Date flyer for the Food Sovereignty Summit that is taking place October 26-29 at Green Bay, Wisconsin. We were just provided these and we wanted to make sure that we got them out to council members. On the front sleeve we have our Disaster Program Information brochure just for your information, and also we have our USDA quick reference guide. And, Mark, also for the general public, we do have two binders up on the table there that list what all is in your binder. We also have a number of documents over there pertaining to USDA information for the public. Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: Thank you, John.

John Lowery: Also, do you want to go over the agenda?

Mark Wadsworth: Sure.

John Lowery: Okay. Today's agenda is a call order that's supposed to start at 2:00, but we are running just a little behind. But for the tribal gathering, that's all right.

Blessing, introduction, review of agenda meeting materials, and then we have the public comment period from 2:30-5:00. Then from 5:00-5:30 we got that down as a working session, so just pretty much time for the council here to discuss and to digest what all you guys heard during the public comment period. And at 5:30 we will adjourn. I'm thinking that during this 5:00-5:30 time we can discuss the agenda for Thursday or Friday, Mr. Chairman.

Mark Wadsworth: Does anybody have any comments? Oh, for the record, John Berrey will not be attending this meeting this time.

John Lowery: And also Mary Thompson will not be attending.

Male Voice: They're supposed to be on the agenda for Friday, right?

John Lowery: Yeah. Someone from the Quapaw Agriculture Department is coming to speak. So those are just some of the things that we need to update on the agenda.

Gilbert Harrison: Mark?

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, Gilbert.

Gilbert Harrison: Gilbert Harrison from Navajo. It would be nice, John, if we can get a list of the members here in case there's any changes in the address, phone numbers, or email. Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: Jerry McPeak.

Jerry McPeak: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Do we have a BIA representative, I mean, I'm not familiar with?

Mark Wadsworth: I believe John said that they will be here tomorrow to give us a report.

John Lowery: Kathryn Clause will be here tomorrow for the BIA. Then on Friday we have someone from the Eastern Oklahoma Regional Office who is coming to speak, and also from the Southern Plains office who will be coming to speak on Friday.

Jerry McPeak: A follow-up, Mr. Chairman. I've had to leave an environment where as you recognize me, I have to work on my tact. I'm interested on what they have to say. I'm really interested that they listen, and I hope that we can get that message to them. It seems that Mr. Black [phonetic] understands that, but it doesn't seem like it was done very damn well. Thank you. [Pause from 09:29 to 09:41]

Mark Wadsworth: We're probably about five minutes away from public comment period, so does anybody have anything they'd like to announce? Yes, Gilbert.

Gilbert Harrison: Mark, I think one of the concerns we, as council members, had the last time around - and we were talking about some of the duties and responsibilities - was to ensure that our members make a genuine effort to be here because this is very important to some of the things we talked about and some recommendations we made. Somehow I would like to maybe impress

upon the people that are not going to be here, unless they are sick or whatever, it's important that they make an effort and they make a commitment to be here. Thank you very much.

Mark Wadsworth: Thank you, Gilbert.

John Lowery: Mr. Chairman?

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, John.

John Lowery: Just for the record, Mary Thompson said that she was scheduled to have an outpatient surgery. That's the reason she's not coming.

Mark Wadsworth: Okay. Thank you.

Jerry McPeak: I'll follow-up on that.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, Jerry.

Jerry McPeak: I don't think, Mr. Chairman, Gilbert is indicating about one absence. Our concern is like we always got one that's not with us because they never did show up. But when you have four meetings a year or maybe you have two meetings a year where you see each other and you miss two in a row, then this is not important enough in your life. [Pause from 11:15 to 11:25] Yeah, they don't want to hear that. By the way, if you're Texans, I will say it for the record. If you think for you Texans that Texas ain't big, I drove from the bottom to -- and I think to the top of Alaska, holy mackerel. [Pause from 11:40 to 11:50]

Derrick Lente: Mr. Chairman, Derrick Lente, Sandia Pueblo, New Mexico. I guess for the sake perhaps of the audience and even the for the sake of myself selfishly, perhaps if we can go around the room and introduce ourselves once again and where we're from. I know we did the roll call. However, I think it's important that we, for those that might be new, reintroduce ourselves.

Mark Wadsworth: Sounds good. Sarah, could you go? Then go this way.

Sarah Vogel: Nice suggestion, Derrick. Thank you. My name is Sarah Vogel. I'm an attorney from North Dakota. I've been on the council - this is my second term. I was one of the attorneys on the Keepseagle case starting in 1999. I worked on the programmatic relief side, the administration of settlement. And still I am working on the case. In my other life, I've practiced law in North Dakota for a number of years. I did the Coleman vs. Block case against the USDA on providing due process and foreclosure in the '80s. I've done just a lot of litigation with farmers as my clients and done some work also with tribes and grazing associations in Indian country and a lot of individuals too.

Angela Peter: Good afternoon. My name is Angela Peter. I am a Dena'ina Athabascan from Alaska. I was the first chair of the first Tribal Conservation District in Alaska. There are now

12. We have about 10 more coming up. The movement is going, and I'm really proud to be involved. Thank you.

Jim Radintz: Good afternoon. My name is Jim Radintz. And I might take this opportunity to explain a little bit of some transition and changes with the Farm Service Agency. Mr. Beyerhelm, who used to be my immediate supervisor, has actually taken a higher level position at FSA. He's now the associate administrator. I'm acting deputy administrator for Farm Loans, at least on an interim basis. I've worked for FSA for almost 35 years, all of it just about in the farm loan area. I spent many years working in loan making, and a lot of that time working on the budget end of things and justifying our request to Congress and that kind of thing in addition to working on loan-making processes and things like that.

For the last five years I've worked directly for Mr. Beyerhelm as his assistant or deputy, or however you want to say it. Actually I grew up on a small farm in Western Central North Carolina and so I know what it's like to unplug a hay baler and pull a calf and some of those fun kinds of things, and so I don't just spend all my time behind the desk.

John Lowery: Hello everyone. My name is John Lowery. I'm the designated federal officer for this council. I work for the USDA's Office of Tribal Relations, and within our office we oversee this council. I just want to mention to everyone that

we do have a sign-in sheet for visitors to sign in, and we also have a sign-in sheet if you would like to do a public comment session or if you'd like to speak during a public comment session.

Also, as a housekeeping note, the restrooms are out this door here to the right. The men's and the women's are there. Also, we do have some water and some coffee up here as well. So there we go. Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: My name is Mark Wadsworth. I am a member of the Shoshone and Bannock tribes in Southeastern Idaho in Fort Hall. As a graduate from the University of Idaho with an agriculture economics degree, I have worked in the Indian agricultural world for the past I would say 20-plus years. I work for the Intertribal Ag Council and also for the Montana/Wyoming Indian Stockgrowers for the past seven years. I worked for my tribe as the range manager for our range program on the tribe in which we manage about 330,000 acres and about 8500 head. Coming on board with the Council for Native American Farming, I've never applied for any sort of USDA Council or anything. But I saw the worth and possibly the ability to make change for a positive, for the Indian country, and that's why I applied.

Porter Holder: *Halito*, Choctaw [speaks in foreign language] - which means hello, I'm Choctaw in my native

language. My name is Porter Holder. I am from this great state of Oklahoma. I want to welcome my council members from out of state. I hope you all like it as much as we do. I'm a rancher from the Choctaw Nation. I reside in the Choctaw Nation boundaries in Southeast Oklahoma. It's all I've ever done. It's all I know. Don't ask me anything else because I don't know anything else. But I know that. I'm glad everybody is here. I hope we have a productive meeting. Thanks for coming.

Carl-Martin Ruiz: My name is Carl-Martin Ruiz. I'm the director of the Office of Adjudication which is part of the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights. So all program employment complaints that are filed within USDA come to my office, and we have a staff of about 60-70 employees that investigate and process those complaints. I've been with USDA since 2007.

When I first came to USDA I was a director of outreach for the department, but then in 2009 things reorganized and I found a different job or a different job was found for me at that time. However, as I was looking through the material, what I found refreshing was -- because when I came on to USDA we had just created the 1994 program that was in the office that I was responsible for. In the recommendations I noticed that a recommendation had been made for that particular office to be elevated and be part of the Office of Tribal Relations in USDA.

I hope that happens. I think it will be good for that particular program in terms of visibility and the kind of support it needs.

I received a call on Friday that Dr. Leonard had to be at a different meeting and he asked if I would attend this meeting on his behalf. He sends his greetings. So I'm here. Hopefully I'll see some of you again in the future. Thank you.

Gilbert Harrison: Gilbert Harrison from the Navajo Reservation in New Mexico. Again, like Mark, I want to greet you all in Navajo. Ya'at'eeh. Can everybody say that, ya'at'eeh? Thank you. You'll all get a star. But anyway, I'm a retired engineer with the Indian Health Service in Navajo. I recently got interested in the council because of two things. Number one, my wife and I, we are farmers. We have a small ten-acre plot of land that we still run. We also do sheep ranching. So we are very much interested in small programs.

One of the things I see is that USDA you have large corporate programs that address off-reservation farming issues, terms of loans and other programs. But in Navajo and in other trust lands, we have other issues. We have tribal enterprises that have a staff that can do a lot of things. But my interest is in the small mom and pop operation because in our valley that's all we have. We have 5, 10, 15 acres. So how can we help those small farms? I really have my heart in that area and

that's one of the reasons I applied for and I was reappointed to this council, because that's where I think a lot of effort still needs attention. So hopefully we can continue some of the good work we started. Again, thank you very much.

Derrick Lente: [Speaks in a foreign language]. In my language that means good afternoon. My name is Derrick Lente. I'm from Sandia Pueblo, New Mexico, 87004. With me today is my daughter, Jade Lente. Back at home, I'm an attorney by profession. But she and I truly have committed ourselves to the operation of our family farm which is titled Lente Land & Cattle in which we raise Santa Gertrudis beef as well as farm alfalfa out in the dessert. I now mentioned her several times in these meetings. She's actually a recipient of one of the youth loans from the USDA, and we're appreciative of that.

But our focus here or my focus here is to simply try to continue the good work of this council. I know that there are a lot of people here in the same boat as I am. I think we just want to make sure that -- it's really not for us but it's for our kids and our kid's kids that we're here taking time out of our days and our lives to try to forward that good message. So I appreciate the invitation, and it's good to be here. And Mr. Holder, if you can do something about the community, I know it gets worse, but right now it's a little bit too much already.

And the tornado watch as well. I heard you've got one, and if you can do something about that.

Porter Holder: If you see one coming, get out of the way.

Derrick Lente: All right. Thank you.

Jerry McPeak: I'm Jerry McPeak from here, in Oklahoma. I am a Muscogee Creek tax commissioner. To the Creeks, I'm a state representative here in Oklahoma as well. We run some cattle. I taught ag at Connors State College for 27 years. I liked that awfully well. I don't like the other thing all that well maybe. I've enjoyed the CNAFR. I think we've done more good in the last six months than we did in the first years. I hope we'll continue to do that. Thank you.

Leslie Wheelock: [Speaks in a foreign language]. My name is Leslie Wheelock. That's means hello everyone in Oneida. I'm a member of the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin. I am the director of the Office of Tribal Relations at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. I really apologize for having my back to the audience, this is not something that I enjoy.

Jerry McPeak: I can understand it.

Leslie Wheelock: As part of the work that we do, we have a number of different relationships and activities that we're involved in. We are the first point of consultation for the department. We are also the departmental representative on the White House Council for Native American Affairs and the Sacred

Sites working group that many people have heard about. It was established by an MOU with four other major departments in the U.S. government. And I'm here to answer questions if you have any. Thank you. [Pause - 25:13 to 25:19]

Mark Wadsworth: I believe that this time we are going into the public comment period. Anyone in the audience wish to come up and speak? We have a microphone right up here. If not, then I'll just make a small suggestion. Maybe if you'd like to stand up and introduce yourselves, that would be awesome. People in the audience.

Jade Lente: Good afternoon everyone. I'm Jade Lente from Sandia Pueblo, New Mexico.

Greg Pitcher: I'm Greg Pitcher. I represent the Shawnee tribe. We're in the far northeastern corner of Ottawa County, and I'm representing the Nine Tribes Council up there. Thank you.

June Marshall: Good afternoon. My name is June Marshall. I work for a nonprofit organization located in Okmulgee, Oklahoma. It's Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative. Our job has been to train people, whether they're Native American or not, to become farmers and ranchers. We just participated in a Beginning Ranchers and Farmers Program just recently, just in the last year. And our job is to try to get all of our people, our Native American people especially. But what we're having

problems with is that we can't reach those Native Americans. Now we do reach them, don't get me wrong. We do reach those Native American farmers and ranchers and gardeners, but they're afraid. And I know this has been stated before. They're afraid of USDA and their help and their offer of help. The Youth Farm Loan, I love. I love that because that's a wonderful program.

But to take away the fear of having to go to USDA and talk to these people and let the people help them get what they need, that's been a struggle for us. It's been a struggle for us. But we're still plugging along. We're still helping our people and other people, our beginning farmers and ranchers, that's who we work with. We also work with our native citizens, and we also work with all the other citizens that want to come in and be a part of what we do in food sovereignty. So my question is how do we get rid of the fear of our Native American brothers and sisters to work with USDA? Anyway, that's my question.

Lizanne Holata: [Speaks in a foreign language]. Hello. How are you? I am Lizanne Holata. And I'm kind of scared to death, you know. I don't know what to say because I haven't been here. I'm a great writer. I sit in the office in the back somewhere. I don't want to do this. But today I'm the executive director, so I'll take in everything you tell me and try not to pass out.

June Marshall: She is our new executive director on the Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative. She's got a lot of energy. She's got creativity and everything. And so she's helped us so much since she's been here January 1st. And so we just push her along and just help her so we can continue to do the work that we do.

Lizanne Holata: She speaks much better than I do. And I agree. It's too humid here because it upsets [sounds like] my allergies. But my name is Lizanne Holata.

Erin Shirl: Good afternoon. I'm Erin Shirl. I'm here with the Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative at the University of Arkansas School of Law. I think all of you know my boss, Janie Hipp. She will be with you tomorrow. She sends her greetings from sunny San Diego, which is where she is right now. But weather permitting, she will land by midnight. So we can all say a prayer for safe travels for her, I'm sure she'd appreciate it.

If you're not familiar with the Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative, we were founded two years ago by Janie and Stacey Leeds - a member of Cherokee Nation and who's currently the only American-Indian dean of a law school in the United States. We're very proud to have her at U of A. We founded the Indigenous Food and Ag Initiative to support tribal businesses and tribal governments providing technical

assistance, training and information about food and agriculture. So if you have any questions about our program or what we do, you can hear from my boss tomorrow. She'll be here to talk about Generation Indigenous and the work that we do with native youth. We've got an exciting summit that you'll hear about tomorrow that we do every summer in Fayetteville. It's wonderful to be here. Welcome to humid Oklahoma from the great state of Arkansas.

Lewis Johnson: I'm Lewis Johnson, second chief of the Seminole Nation. And of course Chief Harjo said one of us needs to be there. I've been in office about 18 months. One of my focus besides health, which is probably the overall sustaining ability of helping to feed yourself. That's what we're about during this next two-and-a-half to three years. We purchased several thousands of acres over the last 18 months. We have what we call a memorandum of understanding with Symbiotic Aquaponics. As a matter of fact, that kicks off April 1st, our first aquaponic project. So our people are saying help us to feed ourselves, and that's what we're about. At least on my part as a second chief, that's the thing issued to me by our nation.

So hopefully in the next two-and-a-half years we'll have some great things running also by the way of cattle. Also, as our brothers in the south are leading cattlemen, they always

offer their help with some tribal [indiscernible]. We have great relations with them as well. So hopefully in the next two-and-a-half to three years we'll have some great things kicked off with the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma.

Unfortunately, historically we've been one of those tribes that has been shrunk as far as land base is concerned. Right now, besides the several thousand acres we just purchased in the last 18 months, we have only 500 acres of land to a nation that at one time had 2,169,080 acres right here in the Indian territory. As a matter of fact, between the two rivers all the way to the Texas border was Seminole country in 1856. And it shrunk considerably. So we're hoping to retain some good things, and I know USDA can help us get there with some of our initiatives. Thank you.

Joanne Dea: My name is Joan Dea. I'm actually with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. I am with USDA to actually open up the Office of the Ombudsperson. So I'm establishing the office. The purpose of this office is to be able to help minority producers raise shared concerns that you or others may have in terms of access to USDA programs. And one of the ways that I will be doing this work is really bringing back those issues to USDA senior leadership and once again helping to identify what those shared concerns are and also bringing them to the relations board.

Jerry McPeak: Joanne, last name?

Joan Dea: Dea. It's spelled D-e-a, but then it's just pronounced Dee.

Jerry McPeak: Your office is where?

Joan Dea: It's in the Whitten Building.

Jerry McPeak: And the state?

Joan Dea: In Washington, D.C.

Jerry McPeak: There you go.

Steven Bond: [Speaks in a foreign language]. My name is Steven Bond. I'm Chickasaw and Choctaw, and I think Cherokee and Swedish and French. I had to marry a Seminole woman to make that happen. It's in my blood to make this happen. I work for the Intertribal Agricultural Council based in the Oklahoma region. Previous to that, I worked out at the western region and so I've seen a lot of different operations and I've had a lot of different experiences with USDA. I spent a lot of time on Navajo. I preferred the grass and trees, but I miss Arizona all the same and New Mexico and running around out there. I'm just here to help farmers and ranchers and to facilitate the good work that --

Zachary Butler: Good afternoon. My name is Zachary Butler. I'm a member of the Sac and Fox nation of Oklahoma. I too work for Intertribal Ag Council. I work at the Southern Plains region which covers Kansas, Western Oklahoma, and Texas.

Like Steven, we are here, and our job here is to create assistance network of the Keepseagle to aid farmers and ranchers and tribes in the USDA program. I suppose we're not here just to administrate to [indiscernible] working on some good [sounds like] lands. We're out here trying to help facilitate the USDA programs for our native people.

Iv Watkins: [Indiscernible] understanding that. My name is Iv Watkins [phonetic]. I live at Muskogee, Oklahoma. I grew up down in Southeastern Oklahoma where I got interested in agriculture. I've got a bachelor's degree in agronomy and a master's degree in ag economics, and a JD at what I call agricultural law. I've committed my career to tribal consulting [sounds like] in Oklahoma. After a stint in Washington, D.C., I worked with Alpha Zeta honorary [sounds like] agricultural group, and the [indiscernible] agricultural law committee. The Agriculture Committee has done a lot.

As the gentleman said, the small farm was where I came from. I still think it needs to be the backbone and is still the backbone of our agricultural industry. I see it's in great danger. I've watched it in great danger for about 55 years. But there is that chance for it to come back now, it has not existed for a long time because the world over there started to realize that more land and more half-tired [sounds like] gasoline engine tractors, stuff like that, have got to change.

We've got to be able to produce more with less. If not, we're going to have food processed for as long as we can see.

I have worked with the tribes since 1975. I grew up and appreciate the wisdom of the elders that I grew up around. I am now still working with them in the form of an organization called NAYBSEC, Native American Young Beginning and Small Enterprise Center. I would like to ask you when you're working on how you're going to go forward with your program to remember that we need flexibility now. We've got to be able to try new ways and new things. Right now that's very hard to get over to land-grant colleges and things of that nature, unless you put a lot of money into their research. So NAYBSEC is trying to find a way to demonstrate new technology without the expenses to people who have ideas of how to accelerate growth in less cost to the small farmers. So that kind of flexibility, I think, will help us all to keep that in mind.

Mark Wadsworth: Thank you all. We really appreciate that. Did anybody else want to make a further comment? Yes, Jerry.

Jerry McPeak: Mr. Chairman, I may have statements that may fit better here than it would just in a CNAFR thing. They're just general statements, if I may make those this time?

Mark Wadsworth: For the record, yes.

Jerry McPeak: Okay. I worked it up there because Leslie and I are pretty uncomfortable here with our backs to everyone.

So we're coming early tomorrow and rearrange these tables, I assure you. I, in the last two summers, have taken some time to visit this last summer, Alaska; and the summer before that, I went out to Blackfeet area and visited there; and Washington and Oregon - some to learn about what those people live like. I didn't go see the leaders. I just went to the ground, to the country and drove across it. As I thought about it as I was coming here and as I was telling about this, I thought about what I needed. And then somewhere I realized the relevance was not about what I needed because I know this. But I don't think that you, who haven't lived with us, understands where we are. Help me, Chief Johnston, and if you guys would. If I'm mistaken or if there's something you guys want to add, I hope you will add.

We here in Oklahoma are not reservation tribes. We have land that is our territory but is not land that we own, and we are not communal in very much of it. Our agricultural production that we have, most of us do as a tribe, do agriculture production as a form of economics. Is that right, Porter? Or perhaps some research or so that we can relate better to our people. But like Porter and I, we are Indian but we are just operators. We're operators not different than our neighbor - our white neighbor, our German neighbor or whoever, or black neighbor. We're just operators. We operate that way,

and we operate no differently than the white guy does or everyone else does. We have access and all those kinds of things the same that anyone else has. So it's not like the reservation tribes. We put our land up. We own our land. We put our land up as collateral and that's the way we operate, which is considerably different from what I experienced when I went to visit the Blackfeet, and even what I experienced when I went to Alaska. It was around that situation.

So for you folks who come from the reservation area, it's just extremely different. We are trying to reclaim by buying the lands that we have. So I wish that we had had time and complement the staff because John is trying to get it fixed where you could go out in a territory. It's just so hard to get far enough out of this dad-gum city where you can see some of the real territory. It was just impossible logistically to do that. We had tribes to give them some busses and give some things, but they just couldn't get out there.

But we produce our own cattle and we produce our own sheep or goats, or whatever we have. And by the way, there aren't many of those. We raise cattle. We raise grass in Oklahoma. We have farmland in the western side, but we're farmers of grass. We raise grass. I'm not talking about marijuana. I'm talking about real grass. On the other hand, I've voted against the bill in the House against legalizing marijuana. I told them

if you'd run [sounds like], you're going to lose too much money if you legalize that stuff. We're doing pretty damn good where it is, leave us alone. Then you guys want to tax us. That's what you're thinking. But at any rate, you might want to cut that off.

Leslie Wheelock: Too late.

Jerry McPeak: I appreciate you identifying yourself as you're here. Some things from a general perspective that I hear that concerns me and I find some continuity in what you say and in what they say. Derrick is an attorney. Derrick will make it, like a flip. They can't make it tough enough. I've been running enough already. The young man is going to make it. Turn him loose in any country he wants, anywhere he goes he's going to make it. He'll make it. We talked about doing these things for the -- we have an outstanding student. We're going to send them to do this. We have some outstanding people; we're going to put them to do that, that in it. My family is going to make it, I promise you. I've been broke and I've had quite a bit of money at one time, then broke again. We're going to make it. My kids are going to make it because we know how. We have generations of knowing how to make it. We can get broke; we're going to come back.

But I continue to hear people, whether it's our people or the people we're talking about, that are afraid, are not me. My

family is not afraid, but we have a lot of people who are afraid. Those are the people who need the help. The children, the kids in agriculture are not the straight A students for God's sakes. They were mostly sent to wherever they want to send them to, you know. That wasn't even the United States. The weak, the poor, those are the ones that need help. I'm concerned about the state legislature who continually wants to help the ones who can be outstanding. We do that here, we're horrible anymore. We're not concerned with the public education or anything. We're concerned about educating the ones who look the brightest or going to be the greatest scientists. Well, for Gosh's sake, they'll make it. They can learn off of that, give them a TV screen. You don't need a teacher. You don't need teachers though. You will always, you'll be the one. Smart kids, give them that dad-gum TV screen, let them learn it. Give me some teachers that can teach. Let them teach the ones that have very low ACTs who can become competitive and can be real citizens.

So as we have these programs, as Native Americans we have programs, it's easy to do it the outstanding kid that's going to make it look good. I'm not impressed. Go get the average kid or below average kid, the marginalized child that maybe doesn't have a talent. And you know what's amazing? It's a little bit like having that seed that's laying out there and it's not

really worth a whole lot, but go and sprinkle that with a little bit of water. In fact, you might put some cow crap on it. See what happens. That's why agriculture programs are so good where you put a little bit of cow crap on a kid. Give a little water on that dude and he grows up and be somebody pretty good because he got some of that stuff on him.

So I hope there's a lesson here. I can tell we have a belly full of it in the legislature up there too. It's so easy to focus on those, the outstanding. But I want to hear what we're going to do for the ones who are afraid. That's not you and I, is it? We're not scared. You can't run fast enough to scare me. It's not us. It's that one, that one that has a potential if we can just help him to get there.

But I wanted you folks to go on. Some people tomorrow are going to be here to tell you that in Oklahoma, and in Texas, and in Kansas or any reservation in Kansas - you know more about that I would - we just don't have them. We have some land. We're progressive and we're getting our land back here in Oklahoma, one casino at a time. The white folks keep on coming and gambling. We get your money to buy back some of our land. Yeah, we've got some other ways of doing that too.

I was interested about the Seminole Nation. This is again a general statement. As a person, not as a CNAFR member, my utility is accessed and my utility, as far as being in the state

legislature and people particularly know, is the Indian people have greater access to the legislature with me there. I mean they're pretty comfortable telling me. Everyone should be pretty comfortable telling me. And we ain't skeered. We may not be right, but we ain't skeered. That's s-k-e-e-r-e-d. For you folks in Washington D.C, if you want a word like that up there, I can interpret it for you if you need me too. It's pretty common down here in Oklahoma though. That's another word you'll hear, ya'all.

By the way, if I told you to go across, if I told you to go antigodlin over there, would you know where that is? Do you what antigodlin is? No? Okay, what's another word? Catty-corner, well, you know what catty-corner is. Those folks that are here, they would be diagonally across over there. So we speak a little different over here, but it works among all of us. But my utility is also in the access I have to agricultural things, particularly livestock. You want to start your livestock? I'm proud of you. I have students that come --

By the way, whatever else do I do, I have a camp in the summertime for kids. There was about 500 kids at Connors State College in the summer with cattle and sheep and that kind of thing. But I have access to breeds of cattle. I would bet you -- and Derrick is already going to utilize this. We have the Connors State College at the national championship center

[sounds like] with this bull last year. This is where I taught for 27 years and we established that. I'm sure for very little, if anything, I could get him semen to that national champion bull. I'm sure that if you established whatever breed of cattle you established or if you want to go commercial, I'm sure I can access semen to some of the very top bulls at very little - if any - cost to you to do that.

There are things that we have access to that we don't think we'd ask about Muscogee state so formal. I think there are things that -- I mean I utilize Porter because I have something to do with the horse and any of that. I called Porter and said, "Porter, I don't know. Go take care of it." So we have those things as I've said. Mark, I didn't realize the territory you took care was that big one thing.

We're going to introduce this group on the floor at the House tomorrow in the legislature. I'm going to say I have a guy from Felt, Oklahoma. By the way, Felt is a dot, pretty much the size of a cabinet. When I tell them I got a guy here and I just threw him 30,000 acres and 8,500 heads of livestock, that's pretty impressive. But as individuals, I sometimes don't think we rely on what we as individuals can offer. But I want you to understand we don't have reservations so we don't understand as well. Do we Porter? We try to. Go ahead.

Porter Holder: It's been explained to me several times, the difference, and maybe it hadn't been -- call me simple. I don't know. Maybe it hadn't been explained to that, but I still don't understand the difference in reservations and nations. I followed the ins and outs.

Jerry McPeak: She had a very good point. In our situation, she dealt with the individuals and we deal with individuals. It's very difficult because she has 10 miles between her people or 20 miles between, and they live in a different community which is a whole different society almost. So it's very difficult. We have a community, an Indian community field, but we don't do those very well. You guys, we're a real community but I don't think, it seems to me [indiscernible]. The thing is there's a problem right here. For you guys, I try to learn about your deal. And it was great.

Angela, by the way, if you need to go to Alaska, she's a great tour guide. She can tell you where to call and who to call. I don't think I ever told you, when I went fishing out there in the ocean, I got so sick. I chummed up a bunch of fish.

Gilbert Harrison: Mark, somewhere along our meeting today or tomorrow, in the next couple days I would like a short recap of our status of the proposed rulemaking changes that have been

made on the USDA-EQIP Program because I think the rules and regulations that were -- and some of the changes that were purposed will have a lot of to do with how some of the Native Americans take advantage of these USDA programs. Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: Thanks, Gilbert. Go ahead, Angela.

Angela Peter: Mark, are you asking for comments? Is that what you --?

Mark Wadsworth: Yes.

Angela Peter: Okay. I just want to make sure that you don't leave me out. From Alaska, as you guys probably know, throughout the meetings I always have recommendations. We're 50 years behind everybody. We're playing catch up, and funding is really important to us. I was going to give this to John, but I'm going to email them. I have seven written emails from Tribal Conservation Districts' recommendations, and I wanted to offer my own as the Alaska Tribal Conservation Alliance executive director.

We received a 2501 grant for outreach, capacity building, and I'm very appreciative of it. But we turned in a program or a grant, the grant for a certain amount, and we got funded at 50 percent. And that was not the agency's fault because the agency got funded 50 percent. But all I'm saying is that it's very hard to do a program and then have a couple of days to cut it in half and effectively still do the program. So I would

like to see that the program, the 2501 program, be funded at 100 percent. And also, it was cut from being a two-year program and now it's a one-year program. If we could have a little bit more consistency I think, so putting it back to a two-year program.

Outreach is extremely important in Alaska. It's been underserved by USDA. It's finally getting up to speed with outreaching to interested the tribes and the tribes participating in programs that they qualify for Alaska practices. Indigenous practices drastically differ from anywhere in the United States. Ask Jerry, Alaska is just unique. It would be in the agency, in the Alaska Tribal interest to find methods to merge the goals of all of the agricultural programs so we can actually participate in the programs. There're only a couple programs like the WHIP program that we can participate in. We have moose problems. We have fish problems. That's what we need to find a way to bring up. Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: Thanks Angela. And just for the record too, they did encompass WHIP into the EQIP now so it's a part of that program. Also, we had a letter addressed to the Council for Native American Farm and Ranching. I'll read this out loud, but I would kind of like to give a little history of this. This comes through the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, the Land Use Policy Commission. On our tribe we have two elected represented bodies

- one is the Fort Hall Business Council, the other is the Land Use Policy Commission. So this is coming from an elected group on our reservation. The Land Use Policy Commission, as the name pretty much explains, deals with many of the land issues that the tribe faces. And I'll just give you a brief comment here, because I am going to be reading acronyms, so that you know exactly what's going on here.

The CRP program is the Conservation Reserve Program, and the CCRP is the Continuous Conservation Reserve Program. These were established back in 1985 underneath the Conservation Reserve Program Act. In the language of the statute of the law, it states that any county within the United States can have up to 25 percent of its agricultural land base signed up into the Conservation Reserve Program. The government would then pay the individual who signed up the contract a set rental amount plus a maintenance fee annually to keep the land into a natural state or to revert it back from an agriculture state to a natural state.

In some cases, actually the Secretary of Agriculture have the ability to do a waiver or an amendment to increase above the 25 percent limitation. So in some cases -- our reservation have basically four separate county boundaries that intersect the boundaries of the reservation. They are Bingham, Bannock, Power, and Caribou. The one county we are going to be talking

about now is Bannock County, one of the counties that intersects above our reservation.

We've always had heartache with this law because we didn't think it was fair that the federal government was trying to supersede the boundaries or the recognized boundaries of the reservation by saying that they would only recognize county boundaries. But that's the animal that we've been faced with and we're having more issues with that.

Approximately back in 1995 the tribe went before USDA FSA to enroll some of its acreage into the Conservation Reserve Program. We did our research. We looked at the boundaries of the reservation and how much acreage we had involved in agriculture, and we had only 3 percent to 4 percent enrollment of our tribal lands into the Conservation Reserve Program. But when we looked at the county boundaries that intersected the counties of the reservation or that were imposed on top, some of them were as high as 37 percent of their land base that was inside the Conservation Reserve Program. We took the stance that the non-Indian county boundaries were utilized in the Indian land base for their benefit as opposed to benefiting all the people such as the tribe itself and the tribal agricultural land base.

Currently I am going to be talking about Bannock County. Bannock County was one of the larger counties that had this

extension by the secretary. We were able to deal with the state executive director at that time, Mr. Dick Rush, and I believe Mr. Bob McMasterson [phonetic] or McMasters out of the USDA in D.C. who headed up the CRP program, and also with the NRCS. NRCS is Natural Resource Conservation Service who basically takes a look at your land and gives it a HEL score, which is highly erodible land index score, which our lands really rated high on, so we were qualified on our land base to enroll in this program meeting the HEL index at that time. What has happened though since that is that we still are not really on parity with the country boundaries in the land that is enrolled on CRP compared to the counties. But we're having a different issue here, and I'll read this out loud for the record.

March 23rd, 2015, Council for Native American Farming and Ranching. Dear Mr. Chairman: The Shoshone-Bannock Tribes reside on the Fort Hall Reservation for Idaho which consists approximately 546,338 acres. The Fort Hall Business Council has delegated the responsibility of overseeing all land use issues and uses within the boundaries of the Fort Hall Reservation through the Land Use Policy Commission. The LUPC had placed land into the Conservation Reserve Program and the Continuous Conservation Reserve Program to benefit allottees and the tribes.

The Land Use Policy Commission works directly with the Tribal Agricultural Resource Management Program which continuously performs maintenance of the CRP and CCRP lands. The maintenance includes the repair of fences bordering the CRP and the CCRP areas, spraying and planting native grass seed. The miles of fence currently in place have not been maintained by previous tenants or have been knocked down by deer, elk, cattle, or winter snow loads. The Land Use Policy Commission's goal is to eventually return the land to its natural state and reestablish the wildlife into their natural habitat. Currently there have been many changes and visible reestablishment of the natural environment in the areas in CRP, and the natural habitat and plant life are returning as time passes.

On a recent tour of the CRP and CCRP areas, it has become very visible that the natural habitat and fauna are reestablishing themselves with the appearance of elk, deer, moose in the wetland areas, as well as sharp-tailed grouse. The tribes have a concern on the tracts' land under the CRP contract. One problem is there needs to be a better understanding of details within the contract. There needs to be training provided and a tribal liaison between the FSA and the tribes because we have been under the impression that we have been working cooperatively with the Farm Service Agency, FSA, until recently.

In November 2014, the LUPC and the ARM, Agricultural Resource Management program were contacted by the FSA and NRCS offices regarding the pending violations on various CRP contracts currently managed by the Bannock County FSA office. The tribes were directed to plow the CRP areas, remove five-foot tall sagebrush, and plant grass seed on various tracts of land under the CRP contract before December 31, 2014. The tribes did not agree with the removal of sagebrush as this creates a dusty dry landscape and affects the natural habitat of the traditional food sources such as rabbits, squirrels, pheasants, and [indiscernible] and the sagebrush is used as a healing plant within the tribe. The FSA and NRCS offices did not agree with the tribal request to leave the sagebrush status quo but directed the tribes to remove all the brush from the designated CRP areas and make ready for planting.

This notification by the Bannock County, FSA and NRCS offices one month prior to the deadline of December 31, 2014 did not allow for the ARM program to complete plowing as temperatures dropped and snowfall hindered the process. The tribes are at odds with the county FSA office's continuous demands on various CRP contracts held by the tribes.

The LUPC suggests a closer look at the process to see where the problem lies with the FSA mandating certain requirements to be completed by the tribes and by certain deadlines. The FSA

office makes outlandish demands to get the job done by a specific time with the threat of violating the tribes and penalizing the tribe for the prior years the land was in CRP. The actions of the FSA office is discriminatory as the tribes have communicated with the surrounding non-Indian farmers managers who have current CRP contracts and have never been required to meet the stipulations within their CRP contracts or have they been threatened with violations on their CRP contracts past or present.

The Land Use Policy Commission respectfully requests your attention to this matter and hopes that you can assist with some resolution to this issue. Respectively submitted, Shoshone-Bannock Tribes' Land Use Policy Commission: Tony Galloway, Sr., chairman; Casper Appenay, vice chairman; Ladd Edmo, treasurer.

I just wanted to read this into the record. They gave me this just right before I came to the meeting. I'm very aware of how we applied for this program in the past, but I didn't realize that we were having these demands put on the tribe. And I think they're all just coming from one county. I think one of the real concerns is in that county, are the non-Indian contract holders being treated the same way? And also, I just think that what they're asking for is probably the ability to work closely and work together to get past this program. So if we can do that, I'd appreciate it. Thank you.

Jim Radintz: Mr. Chairman, let me just say I'm not quite sure how this should flow through the process of the committee. But I will commit to you. CRP is outside of my lane. You probably know way more about the program than I do. But I will take this back to my counterpart who is responsible for CRP and we'll get to the bottom of this.

Gilbert Harrison: Gilbert Harrison here. Since this was a formal written action on behalf of the council and Jim has said that he would follow up, it will be nice if we get maybe a one paragraph resolution to the problem for the record when you guys address it. Thank you very much.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, Jerry.

Jerry McPeak: Mr. Chairman. Mr. Radintz, you made a comment about the protocol or the style that we use. The style that we've used have been very floundering. We are not very concerned about it. You guys have to be concerned up there about the steps. We like problem solution, so we love the fact that you said you'd get it resolved. We really don't care about the steps. We want to know that you got it resolved. That would be great because we are stepped to death. We have for four years been stepped absolutely stepped to death. Your statement is refreshing by itself. Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: Anyone else who would like to make some comments? Yes, sir. If you'd come up to the microphone. Please state your name and --

Steven Bond: Steven Bond from the Intertribal Agriculture Council, the Eastern Oklahoma Region. And I'll speak with my IAC hat on. First, since I worked with a lot of small vegetable producers in my area, there are multiple tribes that have predominantly Chickasaw and Choctaw Countries, what I'm speaking of directly. But it would be just as applicable if we were in Arizona. In fact, I've got an example of that for after this.

The NRCS offices are great. The folks in the offices do a great job, and they are real personable, and they care about conservation. The comment I would like to make is that it's in the conservation practices that often fall short for these small operations. If we could look at integrating some micro production or some modernized vegetable production for micro scale producers and do the conservation practices, then we could get more farmers going and allow them to grow as an operation. One example of that would be the use of a drip irrigation system on a small scale with timed mechanisms that can be altered based on crop needs. So a small-scale operator may have multiple rows of vegetable crops that aren't going to be the same next year and that are going to change throughout the season.

The problem with working with NRCS on irrigation beyond the EQIP eligibility and the two out of the last five and a lot of the things that you all have probably heard about is that we're not designing for one crop. We're not going to put in a big -- let's say we're doing an acre garden, it's not all going to be corn. It will be corn this year. Maybe it will be cover crop after the corn. Then we're going to plant 20 percent of it to tomatoes after the radishes have been pulled up from the same area. Well, when I've presented these types of irrigation systems in NRCS offices, I've often been met with the difficulty in procuring technical assistance from the engineer staff for NRCS for the small-scale systems. So it's not the office that I'm having difficulty with. It's actually the conservation practices that aren't there for the smaller scale modernized vegetable producers.

One example of that endpoint is a Pascua Yaqui producer that I've continued to work with just south of Phoenix. He's been to the office. We've got the conversations started. But when it came down to approving the plan, the state engineer and the office couldn't provide technical assistance on the irrigation system for vegetable production. So this individual is going to have to go and pay an engineering firm to meet the standards to get this practice of drip irrigation improved on the ground, and technical assistance is part of NRCS' job.

I have a similar issue and maybe Raymond RedCorn will speak to that when he comes. We've entered into they're beginning a farm. We wanted assistance with the irrigation. We're unclear as to where we're going with the waiver of the two out of the last five. Is that applicable for beginning new irrigation systems or is that only applicable for existing irrigation systems to upgrade, to increase the conservation appeal?

On that note, I've seen folks develop an irrigation system that was by nature not conservative not because of their fault but because that's the money they have available - so maybe a flood irrigation system so they could develop the records, and then they've been producing with that irrigation system for two out of the last five. Now they're asking for assistance from NRCS to come in with the infrastructure.

Another thing tied to that irrigation is the absence of a conservation practice to install a well, so some folks are using city water. That's taxing the city utilities that oftentimes in Oklahoma are going to be tied right to rural development programs in expanding their water availability for citizens. So we're small rural towns and we're taxed, and we have really bad infrastructure here in rural Oklahoma.

So those two examples hopefully shared some light in the broad spectrum of issues with helping small vegetable producers get established within NRCS. Oftentimes we can find something

that would benefit them while we have the conservationist out on the property or when we're developing a farm plan. And so we are getting a conservation plan established and we may be able to get some payments for cover cropping strategy. But in general, an overview of some of the more modern approaches for irrigation for small-scale operators would be maybe beneficial to increase the access to some of these programs.

Mark Wadsworth: Where is that individual firm? Which tribe again?

Steven Bond: Pascua Yaqui.

Mark Wadsworth: Yeah. Could you mention his name?

Steven Bond: I could. Juan Velez [phonetic]. I don't think he would mind.

Mark Wadsworth: Oh, you bet. I believe I met him when I had been down there in that area and seeing his hydroponic. They were doing it basically with the plants upside down and growing the roots maybe for actual - what would you use it for - for spices and stuff like that.

Steven Bond: This wouldn't have been Juan. He's got a small acreage. He has a market garden. So he produces crops to take to the farmers market, and he's looking at value-added. So he's really small scale.

Mark Wadsworth: He tried to request through NRCS technical assistance with engineering designs for --?

Steven Bond: For his vegetable production. So we were going to put drip irrigation and --

Mark Wadsworth: Oh, for a drip irrigation system?

Steven Bond: Yeah.

Mark Wadsworth: And then NCRS is saying no because it doesn't qualify?

Steven Bond: What their word on that was that they couldn't design the system, that it was beyond their technical capacity to design that type of system, that he would have to work with somebody that is in the realm of designing those types of systems because they're accustomed to doing thousands of acres or several hundreds of acres at the center pivots or flood irrigation systems. So this was something that was out of their realm of knowledge, and so they encouraged Juan to look for another engineer to get a design or to put together a design that they could then approve. So that's what I'm helping Juan with right now. We're putting together an irrigation system --

Mark Wadsworth: But that would cost him money to hire a firm to do that, wouldn't it?

Steven Bond: Several thousand dollars.

Mark Wadsworth: Yeah. Whereas NRCS should through some -- it seemed to me through the university system that someone would have this knowledge.

Steven Bond: Yeah. And it's a specialized realm of irrigation. The drip irrigation has not been around for as long as center pivot or flood irrigation obviously that I was surprised to find that to be the case not only in the western region. But when you're talking about specialty crops, sometimes the technical guidance on terms of water use for celeriac - it's a member of the same family of celery - and so if I was going to raise celeriac and was having NRCS to design the irrigation system for me, they may not know what the heck celeriac is.

And so they go to the extension documents. They go to the county records and look for the specs to see what's the water requirement for celeriac. If they're not able to find that, then they say that we can't provide technical guidance on this. And oftentimes there's a university with an extension program that has conducted that research and they know the water requirements for celeriac, as an example.

It gets really complicated when we start talking about our ancestral seeds, our traditional corn. The cultivation of that, it's like an Englishman in America. It's the same thing. It's corn still, but the water requirements are different. The timing at which we plant these crops are different and so there can be some issues when we're growing these unusual crops that

often conflict with NRCS' expectation or what's on the paper in terms of water use.

But I think the most productive thing would be to encourage NRCS to look at some of these more advanced practices for small-scale operation. It's increasingly hip to have these microfarms now. More, more people are getting them out and doing this small-scale agriculture where one could produce \$50,000 worth of food, vegetable crops that are going right into the Farm to School programs, the Get Fresh programs as opposed to a larger scale wheat production.

To me, it doesn't seem as if they're treated with the same appreciation or respect or the same scrutiny. This kind of programs, they don't have as many cost shares that will be beneficial to the small-scale farmers. So in the case of the Osage farm, we're paying out-of-pocket because not only could we not wait for a -- and I don't mean to speak for Mr. RedCorn, but I'm sure he wouldn't mind. We're going to install this irrigation system because we couldn't wait to hear back whether or not a farm not with irrigation will qualify with the exemption. And by time all that comes back, we've got to get the crops in.

That's a pretty common problem with NRCS. Or not a problem with NRCS, but a problem with the system. We may need a producer in the field that's ready to do something in a few

months. So we're talking late winter-early spring. We're going to implement some strategies or apply for an EQIP program at the deadline, but that EQIP program is probably not going to be approved. If we move forward with purchasing supplies, we're not going to get refunded.

So generally, what I tell producers is we need to really think about two-year planning when we're working with NRCS. And I'd like to see NRCS -- I think that the benefit to USDA and the national economy, even the local economy, would be to make NRCS a little more accessible for beginning farmers and ranchers to help people get established in a conservative way and not have them required to put in something that's inefficient, costly, and potentially bad for the environment in terms of now we're chlorinating the water and we're pumping it through this pipe and we're delivering it to the farm when we could have put a small-scale well in with a holding tank and got your irrigation out.

Essentially the wrap-up is that a lot of these programs, to me, work really well for folks that are existing producers and they're difficult to access for beginning farmers and ranchers. I know how important, we all know, the beginning farmers and ranchers are especially when working with socially-disadvantaged and historically underserved populations.

Mark Wadsworth: Sarah.

Sarah Vogel: I thought your comments were excellent, and I would hope this council will do follow up. And that's what I wanted to talk with you about. I think you're aware that I think it was about a year ago FSA put in a microloan program.

Steven Bond: An excellent program.

Sarah Vogel: It is, yeah. And it's got a shorter application. It's got lower dollars involved. It moves faster. It gets approved quicker. And I think it was very successful. It reaches that group of people that you're talking about that might be the beginning gardeners. You could call them gardeners at the beginning. I guess I'm surprised that NRCS, which has generally been very supportive of all these diversification projects, has hit a bump in the road when it comes to this. But I know that Mark is the chair of a subcommittee called Conservation and Climate Change. I'm not on that committee, but it seems to me that perhaps if you would agree to work closely with Mark. We had a committee last year that we brought in lots of people from outside the council, the experts and folks that could give the Credit Subcommittee advice and guidance in developing recommendations. So I'm hoping that you could work with the -- not to jump the gun, but I'm saying Mark said --

Steven Bond: It would be my pleasure.

Sarah Vogel: And then do you see and if you could just imagine in an ideal world what a workable NRCS micro project

program might look like and just share that for the record? You probably thought about that a lot. And I would assume that the people you're dealing with in NRCS wish there were a micro project too.

Steven Bond: Absolutely. A lot of the cultivation strategies and the approaches to these small-scale operations are -- in some cases it's more art than science. That kind of frames it up. And every one of them is going to be different based on site, just like any other farm. But I've also seen some -- there's some really good cover-cropping strategies that we could use that may not be covered under conservation practices.

NRCS is very progressive and is doing some exciting things. I just watched a little exposé of the great work that they're doing up in Missouri, and there was an NRCS conservationist that had identified a few producers in the area that were using a diverse cover crop mix and they were doing no-till operations. I believe the name of the film or video -- I'm not really sure if we can watch it when it's on YouTube, what you call it, the video. It was called Farmers Under Cover. So there are great examples throughout the country of individual offices that may be more progressive in a certain field than others. There are already great things going on. But to back up to the irrigation, is that --?

Sarah Vogel: Could there be like a description? Like systems that cost less than X and involve drip irrigation practices will pass muster or something like that. Is that possible?

Steven Bond: There's a cost share for irrigation going by the acre, so it's pretty ambiguous. It leaves it open. Now the problem is here in Oklahoma. For example, if we go into the NRCS office in Osage County and talk to them about irrigation, they may say, "Well, we don't do irrigation out here. Not that we can't, but let's get the right person on the phone because we're only doing the irrigation out west in our conventional agriculture, large-scale commercial agriculture."

Sarah Vogel: But drip irrigation has been around forever.

Steven Bond: It has.

Sarah Vogel: And a long time.

Steven Bond: It has for vegetable production, as well as large-scale agricultural production now. In some cases, the center pivots are being phased out for drip irrigation. That technology is currently being developed to have sensors and all kinds of great advances. But I think that the disconnect would be the office in an area that doesn't have center pivot irrigation or the flood irrigation and they're trying to start a vegetable operation in a historic area that's principally grassland. So they don't have the records and the technical

guidance that they would use to implement a strategy. They may not have ever even heard of drip irrigation. But surely they have, but they may not know what that may look like for vegetable operation.

I'm a vegetable producer myself and I was at the irrigation shop this morning. I'm breaking into new ground. I've been using cover crops for the last couple of years to prepare this area, and I'm putting in 1,500 row feet. So it will have 3,000 feet of drip irrigation. Every drip of meter is going to be a two-foot spacing, and the cost to me for that, for the raw materials is about \$1,500. Now that's minus the \$200 or \$300 computer that operates the time mechanisms for each of these zones.

Sarah Vogel: It's affordable.

Steven Bond: It's very affordable. It is. So generally the producer just says, oh, we're going to just make that investment and the paper work is too problematic. But that may keep the producer from entering into additional NRCS contracts that could further benefit the conservation initiative. So that's kind of a wrap-up. I think the first difficulty I'm hit with when bringing this to an office that historically has not worked with irrigation is that they just don't have the technical guidance. So maybe that should be the focus, to develop the technical guidance for that as well.

Sarah Vogel: Let me circle back. I think, Gil, you have brought up similar issues with the extensive engineering many times that --

Mark Wadsworth: Go ahead, Gilbert.

Gilbert Harrison: Thank you, Mark and members and other people here, I think we've discussed this a couple of times. We're considering it maybe an appropriate design by USDA and NRCS engineers. And I think we requested a couple of times also to have the head of this department come and talk with us and have a good general conversation with him. And I remember at our last December meeting he was on the schedule, but there was a no-show. I think it's still appropriate that we request and have a conversation here because from an engineer's standpoint, there's certain criteria that they use. But then from a practical standpoint, there are other considerations. And somewhere along the way, you need to be able to come together and say, okay let's do something a little different. Let's fix the situation instead of overkill. I would like, on behalf of the council continue to request, maybe that department, the head, come and talk with us. Thank you.

Then, Mark, I've got a couple. I need to make a comment too after he's finished here. Thank you.

Steven Bond: Sitting here, I'm a talker. I could talk to you all day about the good and bad things I see and things in

between. But going back to Juan's operation when we initially entered into the discussion within NRCS, we had to develop the two out of last five. So this has been the project that I've been working with Juan on for years. They initially wanted to develop -- based on the water law there, he was only allocated so much water. We could use the residential well if we didn't exceed a certain amount of water. First we have to prove to them that we weren't using beyond our legal limit of water, so we had the well sample. NRCS assisted us with that.

But then they wanted to develop a system that would water all three acres at once. In the spirit of irrigation, generally, when you're dealing with a monocrop, you're going to water everything all at once. And so the concept of utilizing computers and solenoid-run timers, it was - I believe their words, not mine - beyond our level of expertise. This is the same technology that's going into a residential irrigation system. You all know the folks that installed those, aside from a pickup and a shovel, it's not very difficult.

It's getting over that historic monocropping commercial-scale agriculture that's the dilemma because these timers work really well for a vegetable operator that may not have employees that's trying to water a variety of different crops with different water needs that are changing throughout the year. So each one of these computers have like three default settings -

spring, summer, and fall. They're really inexpensive and easy to use.

I would certainly love to continue to help the folks that are interested in developing technical guidance. I've got a background in these things from a biosystems ag in Oklahoma state. So it's a simple solution that would address the increasing demand of these types of conservation practices not only with socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers and historically underserved populations, but with the trend in local foods, this is something that's going to greatly benefit the whole nation. So I felt it worth commenting on.

Mark Wadsworth: Thank you.

John Lowery: Steve, for the record and for the council and for the audience, will you sort of tell the area that you serve here in Oklahoma and also the area that Zach serves as well? And just trying to keep it short, could you tell us what your day-to-day is as far as just reaching out to others and stuff and while you were talking, Assistant Chief RedCorn sent me an email and he will be here on Friday. He said that he was able to speak with you, and he was ready to comment and present. So I appreciate that statement.

Steven Bond: Wonderful. Okay. So I'm Steven Bond of the Eastern Oklahoma region for the Intertribal Agriculture Council. Zachary Butler is the Southern Plains. He stepped out for the

moment. So we're a national organization. We're broken out by BIA regions. And we have folks just like myself and Zachary that work directly with the producers or folks that are wanting to get into production, but we also work with USDA offices regularly and the tribal offices. So we cover a lot of ground for one person. I do every bit as much as work after 5:00 as I do between 8:00 and 5:00. The folks that I'm working with that I'm assisting, they've got my home phone number and my cell phone number. They know where I live, and they abscond with me out of my yard when I'm trying to take care of my chores. So if I'm not working, they drive by and grab me.

We help folks develop farm plans. Essentially it's technical assistance, but it seems to be one of those situations where it's in other duties as assigned or as other duties determined. In some cases I'm just taking somebody to the side and telling them about USDA programs that can be applicable for what they're doing. In other cases, we're measuring out their crop area and determining a feasible farm plan so they can determine how much fertilizer they're going to purchase, what do they want to make a loan for, and oftentimes it's the microloan. But in some cases, it's doing loan servicing with an operation that has been in business and that is going to lose everything. I've done a few of those loan servicings, fortunately not more than loans, but there has been the case.

Oftentimes we're expected to know more than a person sitting in the USDA office, which is really difficult. It's such a broad topic. But we have to know about the programs and the happenings with all the change with farm bills so we can educate our constituents and keep things flowing, as well as make recommendations to USDA as to what we can do at the national level to increase our eligibility. So we deal in eligibility and access. And Butler's got different stories but same scenarios. And we even do Alaska.

John Lowery: How many tribes are in the eastern region here in Oklahoma?

Steven Bond: Oh, gosh. I was going to look at the number, but --

John Lowery: Just an estimate.

Steven Bond: It's over 20 tribes.

John Lowery: And you probably have how many tribal members within the eastern region?

Steven Bond: So I work with some tribes more than others not on --

John Lowery: I mean population-wise, how many tribal members are in the eastern region? Do you know?

Steven Bond: I've never tallied that number. But we do have some of the largest tribes.

John Lowery: Yeah, it's huge.

Steven Bond: Yeah, yeah. I was going to say just for the Chickasaw, Choctaw, Cherokee, Creek and Seminole, we have a huge amount of tribes. The tribes are doing large-scale agriculture and some small-scale agriculture, but there's also thousands of tribal operators in the area. So in an effort to concentrate my program assistance and technical assistance, we've developed a cooperative in the southeastern part of the state and we've got 200-plus people that have met on a regular basis this last year to discuss issues.

And one of the main concerns with the vegetable producers is access to systems with irrigation. Now NRCS does have cost shares to help with the infrastructure. They can't drill wells for irrigation for these small farmers. Another thing that the cooperative group of folks have discussed is more education and outreach not just for the farmers but for their potential clientele. You know, a lot of the programs are going into these areas to help folks access healthy food.

In Stratford, Oklahoma where I live, we have a 90 percent free and reduced lunch rate. Over half of the children are American Indian, and so the group is proactive with children. We're just formalizing. I'm providing the technical assistance so this group can set up their own cooperative, so they can access some of these larger programs to develop some infrastructure, to develop somewhat of a food hub. And it's

principally vegetable operators, but you can't throw a rock in Oklahoma and not hit a rancher. Quite a few of those folks also have cattle. They're not accessing value-added money. They're selling off the hoof or they're selling their vegetables, maybe even unclean potatoes at a farmer's market for a few dollars a pound. They're not necessarily growing all the things they could.

One thing that we talked about is providing the examples and technical assistance to these producers to increase their crop year. So in Oklahoma there are very few people that grow the cole crops, the kale, the cabbage, the kohlrabi, the celeries, the lettuce and things. They were principally a summer crop producer so they're going to grow your okra, your tomatoes, your potatoes, your crookneck squash, the things that we associate with summer time.

But we're missing out on three whole opportunities for funding. So if I can make \$400 off a 60-foot row and if I can harvest everything that I've planted in February, March, April by the time to plant sweet corn and tomatoes, then that's maybe an additional \$400 times 26 rows that I've missed out on. And then at the end of the season, it's an additional \$400 times 26 rows.

So there is some education needed for the producers on all of this exciting stuff that keeps getting thrown out of some of

this crazy busy world of change. But the highlight it seems on everyone's mind is assistance with irrigation. So I'm going to continue the projects that I worked on and personally helped install. We're compiling that data and we're trying to put together a packet for technical assistance, so we can get that to NRCS, so we can have some numbers to work with, so we can work with the engineers and resource managers.

Jerry McPeak: Along that lines of the IAC, and I'm going to tell you like I do the lawyers in the House of Representatives, the short version.

Steven Bond: I'm a big boy, I can take it.

Jerry McPeak: That was it. I think that Angela got to the same place I was. I think all of us who are on this council would like to know when IAC is in our area or doing something. And either I don't read or I don't know because I'm not aware of any of that stuff, but I would like to know about that.

Steven Bond: Of course.

Jerry McPeak: Number two along those things, FYI, OSU has tried for years to establish like berries in our area and make that happen. I mean I'm old so I've lived through that cycle three times, and not done it. I'm not saying it can't be done. I'm not saying it's not a good idea. I'm just saying that you can access some of their work. We've been through it a bunch of times and it isn't a bad thing. It's just that they can show

you some things or tell you some things that did not really work because we bust our butts on that some. But we'd like to know when you're in the area. I would. Angela, wouldn't that count where you are? I noticed your eyes got real big sitting out here. When you guys are going to do something, we kind of like to, if you just let us know where you are or what you're doing, we'd come.

Steven Bond: By all means, yeah. I get lost in the sauce sometimes working directly with producers and this formal group that we put together. So we get the word out for the producers, but oftentimes I know that there's a lot of great minds that we could bring in to assist these efforts.

Mark Wadsworth: I believe Angela has a question for you also.

Angela Peter: Hi. This is Angela from Alaska. I just want to understand what exactly it is that you do again. You work with the producers, individual?

Steven Bond: We work with the producers individually. It may be at a restaurant having coffee and talking about what they're doing and making recommendations for programs, or it may actually be developing a farm plan.

Angela Peter: What did the people in Alaska do that represent IAC?

Steven Bond: They're working strongly with the conservation districts. I can't speak directly for Alaska because it is a whole another world, but they're working with fisheries. We could get Dave on the phone. You could talk for hours. But they're working with fisheries. They're working with policy. I've even heard of some vegetable projects going in, moose habitat. But that is a whole another world of agriculture for me. I'm basing this off of things that I've heard and discussed or have heard them report, but I can put you in touch.

Angela Peter: I know who they are. My point is that I should be working closely with them. I work as the alliance. We're the representatives for the Tribal Conservation District as a whole, and that's where my point is getting.

Steven Bond: If we don't know the answer to a question, we have a great network of folks that we can access information for and we can streamline some of the concerns. So just like this group, we can take some of the concerns that we're finding in the area working directly with the producers and the tribes and get them right to OTR or right to the appropriate offices directly. So we've got a close relationship with USDA.

Angela Peter: I work with very limited resources. That's what I'm saying. I believe you have two reps up there, one in Kodiak and one in Fairbanks.

Steven Bond: I'm under the impression that one is farther north and one is farther south.

Angela Peter: All I'm trying to do is get as much as I can working because we're so far behind, and that's why I appreciate that.

Steven Bond: And I was going to tell Mr. McPeak, Jerry, that I'm an OSU alum and I'm well aware of their programs. But OSU, our extension programs are somewhat behind the times, so I look at those and see some of the work that's been done with vegetable production decades ago and some of the things that they're doing now, I tend to look at Missouri State, Purdue for some of the things and some of the recommendations that they're utilizing. Even their hybrids for vegetable production are really antiquated out of the OSU extension documents. I was in extension for several years, assistant ag. Anything else?

Mark Wadsworth: Thank you. Gilbert has been really wanting to make comments. But do you have one thing, Leslie?

Leslie Wheelock: Actually, I wanted to respond to this. Gilbert, let me respond to this just for a second. John, two things, out of the 2014 Farm Bill, there's this whole farm concept that's swirling around in USDA. I don't know if it's caught up FSA yet. It has to do with the fact that these smaller and beginning farmers do tend to rotate crops. They don't do a whole crop. They do what they can eat and what they

can sell at the marketplace. I think that we need to get a little bit more information on that.

The other thing is a little bit of cross-pollination here. We should be inviting at least the tribal member that's on the small and beginning farmers and ranchers FACA to our meetings so that this information gets carried across to that other group. We ought to be sure that we've got FRTEP information available, a listing of all the FRTEP agents for the IAC folks in case they don't have them and for our council members as well. Federally Recognized Tribal Extension Program people who are also thinly staffed and out in their trucks most of the time. Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: We'll have Gilbert. After Gilbert, then we'll take a quick break.

Gilbert Harrison: Thank you. This is Gilbert Harrison. I want to make a comment here relating to a couple of issues. One is that last week I was in San Carlos, Arizona and we talked about many issues over with the Arizona Association of Tribal Conservation Districts. They had their annual meeting. Here are a couple of comments. One is that IAC and other programs like that and we, in fact, USDA have talked about outreach programs but somehow we're not getting the word out. I hear the same comments here. Angela's saying what do you do, how do you do that. We have people out there supposedly spreading the word, but we're not getting it down to the local level. Because

I've had people make the same comment to me in San Carlos. So somehow that needs to be worked on and improved.

The comment I want to make on is it's just bureaucratic, I want to say a stronger word but I'm going to say bureaucratic baloney that sometimes come up and it can kill a project. Let me give you a scenario here on Navajo. It happened to our group. We have the Navajo Nation government, the council delegates and everybody. They do their thing. Within one of those, they have recognized us, my group, as a local farm board representative. We have several communities that have many small farms, just mom and pop operations. So each community has an elected representative and we are chartered by the Navajo Nation government to go out and try to get grants and other kinds of programs to help the communities and the farmers, which is all well and good.

So using that authority we work with USDA, NRCS, and EQIP to make improvements to our old irrigation system. This irrigation system was worked on and implemented in 1907. That's what the record shows. Somewhere along the line, in the 1930s the BIA got involved. They put some concrete diversion dams, fine. But to this day those are still in existence. We patched them up. So through our farm board initiatives, we worked with USDA under this thing called CCPI where they make grants and contracts to allow local organizations like ours to get grants

to do major improvements to the old irrigation system which is well and good, okay.

So the Navajo Nation says you guys can do it. We charter you to do it. USDA-EQIP says, yeah, here's the money. We'll do that. But lo and behold, they called me up and say we want your DUNS number and we want your SAM number for your farm board organization that's getting this grant for your community. I said what the heck is a DUNS number and SAM number? It is a requirement by the federal government that says you've got to have it. If you're an individual person applying for a grant, okay, you're exempt from this SAM and DUNS number. Somebody here said Native Americans are scared of the government and scared of USDA because any time you get a grant, guess what? You get a 1099. All of a sudden you owe the government thousands of dollars. But that's beside the point.

So individuals, you deal directly with the government and IRS and everything on that. But if you're an entity, a tribal organization or a separate organization, you need a DUNS and SAM number. What do we need to do? So I went back to the Navajo Nation. We said we are your child. Even though you treat us like a stepchild, we're still your child. They said, yeah, we have a SAM number and a DUNS number. But we have no control over you guys, what you do, so we can't let you use those numbers. Boom. That's it.

So our little community said, okay, we'll get a DUNS number. A DUNS number is like an ID, like your Social Security Number that the government identifies you. Well, we can do that. We can get that. But SAM number says, okay, on the other end, if we give you a grant, you have to have some sort of financial control over a financial institution. You've got to have a bank account. You've got to have all these accountants and everything else. You've got to have an annual audit. Guess what? We're just a little organization sort of like floating [sounds like]? We get together. We make decisions on behalf of the farmers.

So we don't have a bank roll so we cannot get a SAM number. SAM stands for a simplified [sic] accounting metric [sic] or something anyway like that. So we're stuck now. We can't get a DUNS number. We can't get a SAM. Let me borrow a word from Jerry here, a damn some DUNS number or damn SAM number. So we're stuck. USDA is now coming and saying, okay, if you don't get it we're going to cancel. This is the kind of thing that we face in real life out there. We're only trying to help small communities get a grant to improve a system, improve a system that has been there since 1907 with minimal updates.

And now, we think we have figured out a way. I'm not going to tell you how because in case there's anybody with the IRS or somebody here, but we've been working with the State of Arizona

Conservation to be creative in handling this. It's all legal. It's just a way of coming around. But you talk about organizations here. I think we're going to put together an organization that's going to go after USDA-EQIP monies to improve a community project, but you've got to make sure you have a SAM number and the DUNS number because it is required. Individually, you're exempt from those requirements. Anybody else is considered an entity and you got to have it. If you don't have certain things, then you're sort of up the creek.

So I think somehow, I don't know, there's another classification that says other within that law. I looked at it. If we can allow for Native American organizations on trust land to be classified as other so we can get the exemption from this, I think that would alleviate some of the problems we have ran into. A year-and-a-half we spent trying to get this thing cleaned up. We just could not make our way through until recently.

Now USDA has been kind enough to extend our project year-to-year. But all of a sudden they said, boom, this is it. Just like that letter you got. So now it's just really hard being out there because if you're a corporation or a corporate entity, you have all kinds of people on staff that can do all these kinds of things. If you're an individual producer, you're exempt. But in that little small area where we fit in, in

trying to help our communities this is the biggest stumbling block we've come across so far.

So I think something like this somehow we've got to work on getting some sort of an exemption status for little organizations that basically are organized to help their farmers and that they can go out and get grants and contracts to do the work. These are legitimate good projects for our communities, but it's these regulations and requirements that become a big obstacle. Somehow I think it needs to be addressed so that we don't have to be, quote, creative to do things. We should be able to take a look at this straightforward and attack it. And I think USDA at the D.C. level, you are aware of what I'm talking about - SAM and DUNS number.

Steven Bond: I'm painfully aware.

Gilbert Harrison: I wanted to go ahead and bring this to their attention. Somewhere maybe we need to be able to look at it and say how can we work this out. Thank you very much.

Mark Wadsworth: Thanks, Gilbert. I think we'll break for 15 minutes because the schedule is tough. At 5:30 I have some more business - we'll see you back here at 4:30.

If you will get to sit down here, we'll go into that last part of the meeting.

Jerry McPeak: Mr. Chairman.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, Jerry.

Jerry McPeak: If I may, I'll start off with your first business.

Mark Wadsworth: You bet.

Jerry McPeak: I have some questions for you guys. First off, for you folks here who are members and Porter and John, you all may need to help me here. We've got to talk about tomorrow morning, is that okay at this time?

Mark Wadsworth: Go right ahead.

Jerry McPeak: Thank you. Tomorrow morning it is important that you try to arrive promptly at 8:00 in that we're going to meet at the State Capitol in what they call the governor's large conference room but it's about two-third the size of this. That's where we're going to meet. At 8:45 the USDA people we have here have organized a press conference, 8:40 actually. And they're going to come meet with us a little bit before that and after that as well. The session will start at the Capitol at 9:00, hopefully at 9:15 however on Thursdays. Even though we can't have prayer in schools in Oklahoma, we can preach at the state legislature and we can pray at the state legislature. We can't pray in schools. Now if you think that that doesn't make any sense, a lot of things make less sense around here. So if we get in for the preaching, we'll be introduced on the House floor about 9:02. If not, maybe 9:20. But you guys will come down the House floor, if you would please, and we'll introduce

you from the House floor at that time as well as our State Rural Development Director Ryan McMullen and Undersecretary Greg Parham.

But, having said that, I'm going to call off these names if I can. What I have, you correct me if I'm wrong. Tell me who's not going to be there and who I don't have that is going to be there, okay? Angela Sandstol.

John Lowery: No, no, no. Peter. P-e-t-e-r, Peter.  
Angela Peter.

Jerry McPeak: I knew that.

John Lowery: You knew that.

Jerry McPeak: I thought maybe you changed your name.

John Lowery: I had nothing to do with the change of your last name - nothing.

Jerry McPeak: From Tyonek- that's why we're doing it now, Tyonek, Alaska, native village of Tyonek, right?

Angela Peter: Yes.

Jerry McPeak: As a tribe? Is it a village? It is like  
a --

Angela Peter: Hierarchal council. Yes, it is a village.

Jerry McPeak: Edward Soza. Baden, California. Is going  
to be there?

Edward Soza: Yes, sir. I am.

Jerry McPeak: What band? Soboba Band of Luiseno Indians.  
Sarah Vogel, Bismarck, North Dakota, the band of lawyers,  
attorneys or whatever. John Berrey is not going to be there.

John Berrey: No, sir.

Jerry McPeak: Gilbert Harrison, Shiprock, New Mexico.

Gilbert Harrison: Navajo.

Jerry McPeak: There you go.

John Lowery: I believe Gilbert will be there.

Gilbert Harrison: Absolutely.

Jerry McPeak: Porter Holder, Soper.

Porter Holder: Choctaw.

Jerry McPeak: What town are you really from? Not you, I'm  
sorry. Mark, what town are you really from?

Mark Wadsworth: It's Fort Hall, Idaho.

Jerry McPeak: That's what I thought. Shoshone-Bannock  
Tribe.

Mark Wadsworth: Tribes.

Jerry McPeak: Tribes, okay. Derrick Lente.

Derrick Lente: Here. Sandia Pueblo, New Mexico. 870

[cross-talking] Can I bring my daughter?

Jerry McPeak: Sure. Well, she probably can't come down  
the floor. You guys, there used to be a dress code. But  
there's not any more so don't sweat it. Wear what's comfortable  
for you. I'll be in a suit for that, I need to be. But you

guys don't have to be. They probably don't want you wearing your hat. Put your hat in your hand maybe though, Porter. I'm not the one who's going to enforce that. As far as I'm concerned, you wear your damn hat. You wear it, boy. Just so you know.

Porter Holder: But you're taking us there.

Jerry McPeak: I'm taking you there. And by the way, I'm proud of it too. I got kicked up for a good reason. John Lowery. You are Cherokee. What are you?

John Lowery: Lumbee.

Jerry McPeak: Oh, that's right.

John Lowery: Not Cherokee, thank you.

Jerry McPeak: Josiah.

Josiah Griffin: Yes, sir.

Jerry McPeak: You're Indian, Native American?

Josiah Griffin: Native Hawaiian.

Jerry McPeak: Native Hawaiian, really.

Josiah Griffin: That's correct.

Jerry McPeak: Are we going to have other people there tomorrow morning, you think, that aren't here now? You don't think so.

John Lowery: Kathryn Clause, she will be there as the BIA delegate to this committee.

Jerry McPeak: Is she a committee member?

John Lowery: No. She's the delegate. And Chris.

Jim Radintz: I don't think his flight leaves until 8:00 from Washington. I don't think he's going to get here for a while.

Jerry McPeak: So Jim, are you going to be standing in for him?

Jim Radintz: Well, I'll be there for me.

Jerry McPeak: I guess, my question is who is appropriate to have -- we're going to bring these on the House floor. Who is appropriate to have on the House floor that --? And I'm also going to have Greg Parham and Ryan McMullen because that's a different deal a little bit. But I'm having them on there.

Female Voice: Dr. Greg Parham?

Jerry McPeak: I know he ain't a doctor. He's like a lawyer. This would be Greg Parham from Oklahoma. Is he hung up on that doctor thing? [Cross-talking]

John Lowery: Is Lisa coming too?

Leslie Wheelock: I know Lisa is coming too. I think we've got to list some more names.

Jerry McPeak: No, Lisa is not going to be on the House floor. It's going to be the undersecretary of USDA.

John Lowery: Well, she is the undersecretary for USDA.

Jerry McPeak: What's Parham?

John Lowery: You have two undersecretaries for USDA.

Jerry McPeak: Let me help you with this. Ryan McMullen did not give me her. He gave me Greg Parham.

Leslie Wheelock: But he's doing the actual announcement though. Lisa is going to be there.

Jerry McPeak: Okay, I will take coaching.

Leslie Wheelock: Let me find out.

Jerry McPeak: You'll find out, okay.

Jim Radintz: Jerry, from my perspective, the deputy administrator for Farm Loans is a designated member of the committee, so I'll be there in that capacity.

Jerry McPeak: I told you, Jim. I told you a while ago I don't hear Washington, D.C. talk very well. So you're going to be on the floor with us or not?

Jim Radintz: Yes, sir.

Jerry McPeak: Thank you. See how it works, isn't it amazing?

Jim Radintz: I'll tell you like I tell my assistant. You tell me where to be and when, and I'll be there.

Jerry McPeak: I like it. And your title, sir?

Jim Radintz: Acting Deputy Administrator for Farm Loans.

Jerry McPeak: Okay. You're probably going to be just the deputy administrator right now because --

Jim Radintz: I'll take a promotion.

Gilbert Harrison: Jerry, are they going to do background checks before --? [Off topic conversation]

Jerry McPeak: Okay. We're going to have Jim Radintz, Angela Peter, Edward Soza, Sarah Vogel, Gilbert Harrison, Porter Holder, Mark Wadsworth, Derrick Lente, Josiah Griffin, Leslie Wheelock, Jim Radintz from this group.

Carl-Martin Ruiz: Can I attend?

Jerry McPeak: Yes, sir. I'm sorry. I don't look to my left very well. Carl?

John Lowery: Jerry Tunney [phonetic] will be here tomorrow.

Jerry McPeak: Title?

Carl-Martin Ruiz: Director of Adjudication.

Jerry McPeak: Oh, yeah. I'm hooked on phonics on that. The Director of Adjudication, okay, for --

Carl-Martin Ruiz: For the Office of Civil Rights.

Jerry McPeak: Very good. Okay, we got you here because of our SAE [phonetic] boys. Don't we? Okay.

Leslie Wheelock: Somebody, anybody, everybody?

Jerry McPeak: She said somebody else.

John Lowery: Tawney.

Jerry McPeak: Tawney is going to be here?

John Lowery: Yes.

Jerry McPeak: And what is Tawney?

Leslie Wheelock: She's a councilwoman [sounds like].

Jerry McPeak: Okay. But tribe?

John Lowery: Tawney is Oglala Sioux, and she is the executive director of the Lakota Fund.

Mark Wadsworth: That's Oglala Sioux Tribe, I believe, at Pine Ridge, North [sic] Dakota.

Jerry McPeak: Okay, that covers it. So we'll get to the introduction. I'll have to get where we're going to go. I'll go inside and we'll do the introductions. Like I said, at 8:40 the USDA plans on having a press conference. Are we supposed to be at that press conference?

John Lowery: Yes. So everyone, tomorrow, as Jerry had said, we've been invited over to the State Capitol. There are a number of things happening tomorrow. Number one is getting over to the Capitol. Logistic-wise, I have a rental car. Leslie has one. Mr. Porter Holder has his vehicle. So we're going to do a caravan over to the Capitol building which is about, minus stoplights, about a three-minute drive over. We need to leave here at 7:30 in the morning. Well, let's gather by 7:30. We will jump in the rides, go over to the Capitol building.

I saw exactly where we need to go. We're going to the 2nd floor of the Capitol building. We're going to go to the Governor's Chambers. We will be there from 8:00 until 8:30. We're going to meet with the state directors from the South, and

then we're going to go upstairs to the 4th floor and we're going to go into a little side room just directly off of the House. That's where the USDA is holding a press conference. Directly after the press conference which will be about StrikeForce, which will pretty much name Oklahoma a StrikeForce State, after that then we will immediately be taken directly across the hallway on to the House floor.

Once that's over, we would then get back down to the 2nd floor to the Governor's Chambers where we will meet with Rural Development folks from USDA's Southern states. We will have a one-on-one with them until around 11:30. So it sounds like a lot. It is, but it is nothing that we cannot handle. So it would go pretty smoothly as long as we just follow directions, as long as Jerry doesn't get us thrown out.

Jerry McPeak: If you take a cab, it's probably ten minutes even at that time of day. For those of you who like art, if you want to come early, there's an art display as you walk in the east door. I would come in the east door because that's the easiest access. And there's an art display there. Not because you guys are coming that I'd like to tell you. Well, that would be a lie. We have a lot of Native American art in our Capitol. It's permanent. We have a lot of Indian art in our Capitol building.

John Lowery: There's a ton of native art there, a ton. I was blown away by the number of sculptures and things and stuff there.

Jerry McPeak: Are we going to attempt that deal with the eating thing tomorrow or are we not?

John Lowery: I was going to let you bring it up. So tomorrow for lunch, we have the option of doing lunch at the State Capitol building which I think makes sense. The way that it's set-up, we cannot pay for lunch individually. So Jerry has said that he will pay for everyone's lunch upfront if you guys are willing to reimburse him individually directly after or before you leave town.

Jerry McPeak: That sounds horrible coming out that way. If you don't pay me, it's going to be paid for [sounds like] him. Actually, the location is not in the Capitol, but it's what's called the Faculty House which is a very historic building. It's been there forever and ever. OU manages it. I know this sounds hotsy-totsy, but it's just an old house. It's not so hotsy-totsy, but you do have to be a member and all that kind of stuff. They only let me do it. I can set the thing up if you want to. It's a pretty good grazing deal. It's a buffet deal, but it's a classy buffet deal, *pitch 'till you win*. They've got some nice desserts and stuff. I don't know. I think it's about \$15 for the *pitch 'till you win* kind of thing.

So I would be happy to do that. At the same time, that may be more trouble than it's worth and you might just want to take a cab back down here some place. But however you want, I can get that headcount. Your daughter is absolutely welcome, your wives or girlfriends. Just don't bring your wife and your girlfriend, or you take your husband and your boyfriend. I don't have time to mess with that, so whatever.

John Lowery: Jerry, how far is the eatery from the Capitol building?

Jerry McPeak: The eatery? We're on 23rd, and that's at about 13th or somewhat.

John Lowery: I got it.

Jerry McPeak: I'll get you there.

John Lowery: So it will consist of us getting into the car and going back.

Jerry McPeak: I'll have some state representatives. You may be right. Now this is serious. You may be riding some pick-em-up trucks that smell like they got cow poop because there are state representatives who run cows. But I'll have some cars and stuff that will get you down there. I'll find a way to do that. That will probably cost me less too.

Leslie Wheelock: What time do we meet downstairs to get ourselves over there?

John Lowery: We need to be 7:30 on the dot. [Off mic conversation]

Sarah Vogel: I have a question. Will you have trouble parking?

John Lowery: No, because at that early in the morning, we're going to be fine.

Gilbert Harrison: Do we meet down here?

John Lowery: Yes, sir.

Jerry McPeak: Are you all driving? Do you have your cars?

Sarah Vogel: I'm going to ride with someone.

John Lowery: There's going to be a three-car convoy.

Jerry McPeak: Okay. I can make that happen, the same thing, that will happen just for you. You've got like five or six cars or what have you got?

John Lowery: Well, we've got three.

Jerry McPeak: Okay. I can make that same thing happen.

Porter Holder: We rented a car at the airport because the rented car [indiscernible].

John Lowery: So you want to drive? So we got four. So we'll be good. But Jerry, according to Janice, the parking lot will be totally open at 7:45 in the morning. I'll tell you what, 7:15, lobby. We're going over which means we're pulling up at 7:30. How's that? So just in case there's a D.C. type of traffic.

Sarah Vogel: And this is probably overkill, but the people who aren't here will have to get a note.

John Lowery: Yes, I will send an email. Yes, ma'am.

Sarah Vogel: Even not an email, maybe a message from the hotel when they check in.

John Lowery: Oh, yeah. We got you.

Sarah Vogel: The people who will come in tonight, yeah.

John Lowery: Let me say this too while we are discussing this, Mr. Chairman. So what is happening, and this is a total coincidence, is that the Southern State Rural Development directors are meeting here in Oklahoma City this week. Back in December we had the opportunity to meet with four state NRCS conservationists plus one of the deputy chiefs, and we had the presence of FSA here. So it's like when we've had the presence of FSA, we had a good probably two-hour discussion with NRCS in December. And now with the state directors being here in Oklahoma City, we have an opportunity to sit down with them for an hour-and-a-half and talk with Rural Development folks.

So this is a great opportunity. We're all going to be over at the Capitol building tomorrow, so this was a prime opportunity for us just to be able to sit down as council members without business taking place and just sit down and discuss with them what Rural Development is doing within Indian country. So this meeting has a couple of different things going

on. We have a rural development thing going on. We have a youth thing going on. And then we also for the first time we have BIA regional directors coming to speak to us.

For the next two days there's going to be a jam-packed schedule. I know that you guys do not like having a jam-packed schedule, but it's hard to pass up a chance to meet with six, seven state directors at one time. It's hard to pass up a chance to be able to speak with two BIA regional directors when they are serving a state that you're in. And it's hard to pass up a chance to talk with people who are dealing with extension and 4-H here in the State of Oklahoma. We might get tired of stuff, but we did include some breaks into the agenda. But I think we're going to be fine.

I've worked closely with Jerry and Janice, and also with Ryan McMullen here within the state. So we think that we've been able to put together a pretty good Council for Native American Farmers and Ranchers meeting. I hope that you guys are pleased, and I hope that we're going to be able to get a ton of information. And just from having Steven Bond here and Zach Butler, two people who are very engaged with the IAC on the ground, I think we're going to have a pretty good two days of meetings with you guys.

Jerry McPeak: Mr. Chairman, along those lines, Ryan McMullen, who is our State Rural Development coordinator, was my

seatmate in the House. He totally understands that those people are coming, expecting to have some input from you guys. That's the best thing that will happen in Nevada.

John Lowery: Yes.

Jerry McPeak: He knows that they don't expect to pound us with information. There's going to be an opportunity for you guys to say, "Well, this is the problem where I'm from, how does that relate? Can this fit in?" They all understand that. He has told them that you may have not just questions about what they say, you have statements that you want to tell them and they want them. So it's not just pounding with that. I don't know about the BIA. I wasn't involved with them. But these guys are coming being told that we're not just interested in having them talking to us, you may want to talk to them about things.

Along with that, before I relinquish this to Mark, I need a favor. Janice Stotts is my assistant's name. She has spent a lot of time on this and did a lot of legwork. And kind of like you do with your wife, we're close. If I happen to forget to introduce her and make comments, it might be better if it came from you. But if you introduce her and make that comment, that would be great because she has done a lot of legwork in just like stuff today.

Mark Wadsworth: You bet. Yes, Angela.

Angela Peter: You're talking about rural development, right?

John Lowery: Yes. And let me say this to Mark. They will have packets put together for us, the State Rural Development people. So it will be an introduction to RD, and then there will be a chance to have that dialogue as well. And also, over the next two days we will have a youth roundtable discussion. Jerry's son, Jason McPeak, is going to bring some of the FFA students from down around his home. And also Janie Hipp is going to bring some of the Intertribal Agriculture Council students as well. And also Derrick Lente's daughter is going to participate in the youth roundtable as well.

So we will have an opportunity to sit down here and we're going to engage with the future. That's something that you guys have talked a lot about, and it's going to be good to be able to hear directly from them on what is needed and how USDA and us can help them be successful. And Josiah is standing behind me so apparently he wants to tell me something.

Jerry McPeak: We are pretty normal for a Native American in Oklahoma as far as the way we look, and so we're pretty diluted.

Leslie Wheelock: You look like me, I'm a Woodland Indian. We don't get tanned. You're diluted or delusional. A little bit of background on Rural Development because we don't talk so

much about their programs as we talk about NRCS and FSA and some of our other buddies. But these are our small business people. They have all of these small business products for any kind of an enterprise, including rural producers, value-added producer grants comes out of this organization. A lot of the support for all of our small farm programs, whether it's farm-to-school, local - we've got a local farmer's market and production that comes out of different places. But those businesses that run those different programs are our small businesses, and those are funded out of Rural Development. They have microloans similar to the FSA microloan for small businesses. They also do housing, all kinds of housing. They do housing in Indian country. They do multi-family housing, single family, mortgages, guaranteed lending. They also have a couple of programs to help with housing renovations, small renovations, and maintenance.

The other thing that they do is the Rural Utility Service, so all of the broadband and electrical co-ops. If you guys are having problems with your co-ops, talk about it tomorrow. Water and waste water, what am I missing? I'm missing one. Utility, phones, electricity, water, waste water, broadband. That's it.

Sarah Vogel: I don't think there's a tribal college in North Dakota or South Dakota that does not have sewage and all

their infrastructure. It's huge and they're usually the first people at the table.

Leslie Wheelock: So those are the community facilities.

Sarah Vogel: USDA Rural Development, they are the rock.

Leslie Wheelock: The Community Facilities Fund is probably the most useful tool that they have. It helps to keep our tribal colleges and universities mortgage-free. It has paid for the buildings. It has paid for the infrastructure. It builds our tribal schools, not the BIE schools, but our tribes' schools, our tribes' charter schools. In Oklahoma last year, I know they funded an emergency rescue dog. Essentially, if it's part of your community, you can use Community Facilities Funds to help build it. I just want to make sure that we cover a whole range of stuff that they do.

Mark Wadsworth: I just have one comment here. I believe that the end of the public comment period ended at 4:15, so we're just doing [cross-talking]. It is now 5:00.

Jerry McPeak: That is part of what I was saying about the difference between where we live or where you live. And while I'm listening to you guys at first, I'm listening about the water wells, I'm trying to water several thousand people or cattle or whatever and it's hard for us to think about watering 10, or 12, or 20. So that's difficult. So when we're talking like the USDA Rural Development, we get millions of dollars for

a hospital as an example. So it's a really great thing. But we tend to think of it more in that side rather than getting it down to our individual people. That's where I had to adjust when I came in here was for that.

The second thing I will tell you it's not quite so heavy. Tornadoes are not an uncommon thing in Oklahoma. I have been within a hundred yards of three or four of them. So I'm telling you that to say this. If you see a tornado coming, stay with me because I've never been hit by one I've been real close to.

Mark Wadsworth: I guess Rural Development also has housing programs too.

Leslie Wheelock: Right.

Mark Wadsworth: Does anybody else want to bring anything forward just to air any concerns or any changes? So if not, then I guess Gilbert has a motion on the floor to adjourn.

Gilbert Harrison: Just a comment and then a motion. Mark, I still like to get even just a blurb on the status of the EQIP rulemaking status. Maybe Leslie or John maybe can call somebody just to find out where we're at, when they may have the final results published. With that, if there's no other comment, Mark, I'll make a motion we adjourn for the day.

Mark Wadsworth: One last comment was that 7:15 in the morning is now the time to meet in the lobby.

John Lowery: Let me say this too, Mark. Just as FYI, they do have a breakfast buffet here in the morning. I think it's like \$8.99 or something, so just as FYI for tomorrow and the next day. But at 7:15 we'll meet. We'll get our convoy going and we will roll up to the Capitol. Again, thank you guys.

Mark Wadsworth: I recommend you get something to eat because it sounds like you won't have anything until lunch. And there is a motion on the floor to adjourn.

Angela Peter: I'll second.

Mark Wadsworth: It has been motioned by Gilbert and seconded by Angela Peter. All those in favor, raise your hand. Anyone opposed? Motion passes. We'll see you tomorrow at 7:15.

John Lowery: Do not leave anything that's actually worth something. Definitely take your nametags with you just so you can have those tomorrow. I think that that would be very, very nice to take over there.

[End of file]

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