



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

USDA-Council for Native American Farmers and Ranchers  
Part 1, March 27, 2015

Mark Wadsworth: Okay. I think we'll get this going. It's Friday, March 27<sup>th</sup>, approximately 8:30. Call to order. I'll go through and do the roll call. Porter Holder.

Porter Holder: Here.

Mark Wadsworth: John Berrey. John Berrey is not here.

Tawney Brunsch?

Tawney Brunsch: Here.

Mark Wadsworth: Gilbert Harrison. Gilbert Harrison is not here at this time. Derrick Lente.

Derrick Lente: Present.

Mark Wadsworth: Jerry McPeak. Jerry McPeak is not here at this time. Angela Peter.

Angela Peter: Here.

Mark Wadsworth: Edward Soza?

Edward Soza: Here.

Mark Wadsworth: Mary Thompson. Mary Thompson is not here. Sarah Vogel. Sarah Vogel is here. Chris Beyerhelm?

Chris Beyerhelm: Here.

Mark Wadsworth: Jim Radintz.

Jim Radintz: Here.

Mark Wadsworth: Leslie Wheelock.

Leslie Wheelock: Here.

Mark Wadsworth: And Carl-Martin Ruiz. Carl is not here at this time. And I am present also, Mark Wadsworth. I guess we'll go through and do a quick blessing again. And Derrick, if you'd like to lead us, I'd appreciate it.

Derrick Lente: [Inaudible] Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for just being here this morning. In our Father's name, bless us all to make the right decisions. On behalf of all our fellow Indians back at home, please allow us to make this another productive day as it's the last day. And to those that are leaving today or tomorrow back to our homelands as well, keep them safe, get home safely so they may once again be united with their friends and family. In God's name we pray.

Mark Wadsworth: A little bit of housekeeping items. We are going to be doing a little bit of change to the agenda today. USDA Ombudsman update by Joanne Dea is on schedule. The OTR update Leslie will be giving, or we're going to have Sarah at that time. It's Leslie, okay. And then the Keepseagle update will be Sarah during the IAC update. Then we'll have a break from 9:50 to 10:00. Choctaw Nation will be from 10:00 to 10:20. Quapaw Tribe from 10:20 to 10:40. Osage Nation will be 10:40 to 11:00. And then we're moving up the BIA update to the CNAFR working session. I'll have Kathryn to do her update

during that time. And then we'll have a lunch break. Then after lunch, we'll be having our working session during that timeframe. At this time, I'll be leaving a little early at 3:00, and I believe some others will be leaving also. But that will be the changes to the agenda. So let's go ahead. Anything else you want on the CNAFR housekeeping? Gilbert Harrison is here.

John Lowery: I just want to say that for the Choctaw Nation, Shannon McDaniel will be coming in. He's part of the Tribal Management team. For Quapaw, we have Chris Roper here who's -- why do I have Chris on here for? I'm sorry, Tom.

Male Voice: It's okay.

John Lowery: And then for Osage Nation, we have Assistant Chief Raymond RedCorn will be coming to speak. So those are the three individuals for that.

Chris Beyerhelm: Mr. Chairman.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, Chris?

Chris Beyerhelm: I don't know if we've ever done this before, but I'd like to send some sort of thank you letter or something to the young people that came yesterday. That was just a wonderful event. I don't know if we have a protocol for that, John or Leslie. They spent the whole day here and they were still here at 6:00, a couple of them, listening to the BIA

thing. So I thought it was pretty cool. I'd like to recommend that.

Male Voice: I would just echo what Chris said. I agree completely. That was just pretty amazing yesterday.

Mark Wadsworth: I totally agree.

Angela Peter: Mark.

Mark Wadsworth: Go ahead.

Angela Peter: Right along those lines, I was thinking that it would be a good idea for the council to acknowledge and thank those members that are no longer on the council.

Mark Wadsworth: We could do that. If nothing else, are you ready, Joanne?

John Lowery: Mr. Chairman?

Mark Wadsworth: Yes?

John Lowery: Can I do the housekeeping items?

Mark Wadsworth: Oh, yes. I'm sorry about that. I thought we were in that --

John Lowery: Thank you. This is just a reminder about your travel receipts and stuff. So we're going to need your hotel receipts. And also we need taxi receipts to and from and stuff, okay? So most of you guys are doing a great job getting it back to me ASAP. Some of you, speed up. The quicker you get them to us, the quicker we get it back to you. And as captain here can acknowledge, we do a pretty good job, a quick

turnaround of getting funding back to our people compared to other departments. So please help us out with that.

Also as Mark noted, he's leaving today at 3:00. There are a number of individuals who will be leaving early. So I just want to ask you guys to try to get as much done before we lose a quorum. And also beginning April the 6th, me, myself, I will be doing a detail to the Forest Service for 90 days. So I will still oversee the council and stuff, but I will be doing it from a different position, different location or whatever. And Leslie's hating me right now. So anything that you guys need to send to me, please include Josiah. And if it's like extremely important, it has to be done tomorrow, make sure you also include Leslie as well. So I will follow up as quickly as possible and stuff, but I just wanted you guys to know that for the next three months, I'll be in and out.

Leslie Wheelock: Tell them about Cindy.

John Lowery: Also, within our office, we finally got an administrative assistant in the Office of Tribal Relations. So they finally made this permanent, and then they finally allowed us to have an admin after posting the job six months ago. So we finally have one. She's doing great work. Now our total is four people in the Office of Tribal Relations for all 90,000 employees of the USDA. So we are slowly moving up, and we might actually get some stuff done. So anyway, thank you all for

coming. I thank the audience. This has been a great meeting overall, I do believe so. And I'm going to shut up now.

Mark Wadsworth: What's Cindy's last name?

John Lowery: Cindy Eaton. Eaton, E-a-t-o-n.

Mark Wadsworth: Thank you. Joanne?

Joanne Dea: Thank you for the opportunity to provide an update this morning and be with you all here at the council. So my name is Joanne Dea. I'm the ombudsperson at USDA. And I'm located in Washington, D.C. In December, I provided a short introduction to the Office of the Ombudsperson, and so you have that as background.

For today, I'd like to cover the following three areas just really briefly. One is to talk about what types of sources of information I'm going to be using to help look at the systemic issues and recurring problems that may be coming up. And then the second one is to talk about what I'm doing with looking at the information that's been collected through the Keepseagle settlement agreement. And then the third part is that I'd like to talk about when the office, my office will actually officially open.

As I am moving forward, I'm looking at a variety of, again, sources of information to call what are these core issues of concern. So the first area that I'm using is really USDA data management systems. The second one is actually what I'm calling

direct contacts, group types of meetings. So for example yesterday's event where we're able to hear from the Southern Rural Development state directors and have that conversation back and forth. The third area is really looking at written documents that talk about issues of access and barriers. And then the fourth area is what I'm calling visitor information and program information. So that would include certainly talking to USDA programs inside in terms of understanding more about what issues are showing up for them.

So each of these is really a different type of information and it's to illustrate that I'm going to be culling from all these different sources to try and, both again depending on what information is, I may be reviewing or analyzing the information. I may be just listening to again try and pull out what that core concern is, and then also just looking for opportunities where there's the ability for me to hear firsthand what those concerns are from minority farmers and ranchers.

What I plan to do as well at the end of this fiscal year, so September 2015, is to produce an annual report. And in that report, it would be a very high-level type of document that shares what I've heard during the time that I'm this ombudsperson as the shared concerns that farmers and ranchers are bringing forward and then also identify the issues and recommendations for those actual areas.

In terms of actually just the work that I've been doing and the work that I have done since I last saw you in December, it's that I'm continuing to build a foundation. As per that foundation, for me, it's really understanding USDA much more, understanding the programs, making connections and contacts within USDA. That will only help as I move forward in terms of - as you all would understand - building relationships, making those connections, building trust as well. In terms of the rollout, the official kind of rollout launch for the office, I expect it to happen in a few weeks. So I did want to share that today. And lastly, I am happy to answer any questions that you may have or hear any comments or concerns.

Mark Wadsworth: Sarah Vogel.

Sarah Vogel: One of the specific provisions in the settlement agreement of the Keepseagle case was that the ombudsperson would review the statistics gathered on loan-making by USDA. Could you give us an update on what you've learned from that review?

Joanne Dea: Thank you, Sarah, for the question. In terms of the statistics, the information that's been collected under Keepseagle, we have five years of information. I am working closely with the NASS statisticians. So I've met with them five time now to look at the information, analyze it, look at it from different points of view. I'm not at a point - at this point,

Sarah, and the rest of the council members - where I'm able to speak to what I am learning, but that part of the analysis is happening right now.

Sarah Vogel: I know we've discussed in prior meetings that there were some anomalies, I would call it not necessarily problems but anomalies with several states. I recall Arizona being one of them. I can't remember, but they would be in the minutes. Have you looked at those?

Joanne Dea: So I'm just getting to the point where I'm looking at the state-by-state breakout. So again I can't speak to that, Sarah, at this point.

Sarah Vogel: Have you talked with Leslie or John about those statistics?

Joanne Dea: I have not yet at this point.

Sarah Vogel: It might be a really good idea because it seems to me that would make some sense because tweaking the information, it isn't necessarily a report people are looking for. It's just why is it that statistics are such and such in, say, the state of Arizona? And then more finally, because you have a county-by-county, why is it that there is such a low turnout in X reservation or Y reservation? So that you can make informal contacts with the county supervisors. Maybe it's just a little more outreach. Have you talked to Chris about these

statistics? Because I know he's looked at them extremely closely.

Joanne Dea: At this point, I do plan to have those conversations with Chris and Leslie and others.

Sarah Vogel: I guess it would be -- now, it's Jim. Sorry.

Joanne Dea: Jim. So that will be happening, Sarah.

Sarah Vogel: Well, I think it should. I really do. We don't care so much about a rollout of your -- I mean that's very important too. But the statistics are there. Time is going on. This council is not going to be here necessarily that much longer, so I certainly hope by our next meeting we can have more detail. Thank you.

Joanne Dea: Thank you. Any other questions? Thank you.

Leslie Wheelock: Mr. Chairman.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, Leslie.

Leslie Wheelock: I'd like to recognize Mr. McPeak has joined us.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes.

Joanne Dea: Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: Jerry McPeak is present.

Jerry McPeak: Yes.

Mark Wadsworth: We'll go on to the next item, and that will be Sarah Vogel. If we could get --

John Lowery: Sarah is not the director of the Office of Tribal Relations.

Leslie Wheelock: Although there are days I'd gladly hand it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to give you a couple of pieces of information, actually kind of recapping on what you said earlier today. Yesterday's session I think was very interesting in terms of giving us a dip into the history of the Dawes Act that most of us are pretty familiar with - the Dawes Allotment Act. But few of us are familiar with how it affects the Oklahoma tribal citizens compared to other states' tribal citizens because with the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act, most of our allotment failures ceased with the exception of the continuing fractionation of lands. Here in Oklahoma - we went for the BIA folks yesterday - as soon as you get to 50 percent or less blood quantum, that land is gone. There's no way to recoup it.

Jerry McPeak: You could sell it.

Leslie Wheelock: I mean you could sell it back to a tribal member, but -- yeah. So I appreciate that. I appreciate we also have a young Cherokee woman in our office. I took her over to the National Museum of the American Indian which has an amazing, amazing treaty display these days. They're actually putting up some history. I can say that I worked on the first setup. But they have this great treaty display. And what we

learned from her was that she knows all about the Five Civilized Tribes, but she was not aware of all these other tribes that are out there. We heard that from the kids yesterday. And so to the extent -- and I think we hear that back in the other direction as well. You know, our kids don't know about each other's communities and each other's histories, and I don't know how we'll work on that. But I think that we do need to work on getting a little bit more history into our program, and we'll see if we can help with that a little bit. No hard lifts. But I think that yesterday was really informative about Oklahoma because it just changed my whole perspective of what goes on here. I knew some of it was different, but I didn't know it was that different.

In terms of the Office of Tribal Relations and what we have been working on, we had a couple of trips this last term since our last meeting. We accompanied Secretary Vilsack to Choctaw area in Oklahoma. It was the first time that a cabinet level person had visited the Choctaw Nation's area. Choctaw is the first designated tribal Promise Zone. He had a really good time out there. He had a very limited amount of time and seemed to stretch it out about as far as he possibly could. We came back with a lot of to-do's that not only affect and benefit Choctaw but affect and benefit our other tribes and our other tribal work within USDA. So there's a lot going on there.

One of the questions that came out of that session was why isn't Oklahoma a StrikeForce state? And you saw what happened yesterday. That's how fast we are trying to respond to questions and concerns that are raised by our tribal folks. The deputy secretary last month went to Gila River, just south of Phoenix in Arizona where their youth council and their new leader have requested assistance with putting in local crops and local farming for local consumption. Their nearest grocery store for many of them is about 45 miles away. They don't have a grocery store on the reservation itself. They farm. They have a huge corporate farm, something like 60.

Jerry McPeak: Where is that?

Leslie Wheelock: Just south of Phoenix, Arizona, Gila River community. And their farmland there is all commercial crops, about 65,000 acres under production. They just won their water settlement case a year or so ago, and they're looking to try to figure out what to do for their people and making their people healthy. They have the highest rate of diabetes in the world. They have been working with Indian Health Service for at least three generations of tribal members to try to figure out how much of that is genetic and how much of that is not genetic. And so there's a really strong emphasis there on trying to get good food into that community.

Again, we will take that. Whatever model we put together for Gila River, we'll have something to take to our other tribes. Other tribes are coming in to our office pretty much weekly saying we want to start growing our own food. To the extent that we can put together guides to help them do that faster, more efficiently and better, we will do that.

Things that are coming out of the White House that you should see a lot of spin on over the next few months include the Generation Indigenous effort or Gen-I as they're calling it. Generation Indigenous is an effort that was kicked off following the president's visit to Indian country in North Dakota last summer where he had a meeting with some youth that were put together. He and the First Lady came at that meeting and basically blamed their handlers for setting them up because they then were supposed to go into a powwow, a large rambunctious powwow, and they were visibly shaken by spending the time talking to the youth. They didn't realize things on the reservation were so bad. They didn't realize life among the youth was so bad. Kids were talking about suicides and the fact that they didn't have any real future and all of the things that we sometimes hear from our kids and we all get a little bit too accustomed to. It just kind of smack the President and the First Lady in the face.

And so they started this initiative to kind of raise up our tribal youth to help them get their BIE schools in better shape. There are funding requests on the Hill to help renovate the BIE schools which have never really had enough funding to keep them in good shape. We're working on broadband initiatives and you name it. Part of what that Generation Indigenous is leading up to is a tribal youth conference in Washington, D.C. in July, and we will all be working toward that effort. So you should see some of that. We will try to get it out to you. When they start asking for youth nominations, we will try to get that information out to you as quickly as possible. When you see those notes, those emails coming out probably from me or from Josiah, please pay attention to them because those time periods are kind of short. I want to make sure you all have a chance to put forth some of your youth for this effort. I'd also like to get a feedback after the effort because we're kind of wondering why we're bringing a bunch of kids to Washington, D.C. instead of going to where they are. That's a personal note.

The other thing that's kicked off very recently is an Executive Order on the Arctic region which was signed January 21st, 2015 and labeled Enhancing Coordination of National Efforts in the Arctic. It established an Arctic Executive Steering Committee, and for the first time in all of the Arctic work that the U.S. government has been doing jointly for the

first time, they've included the U.S. Department of Agriculture. So we have a lot of work that we do in the Arctic. We, along with the state of Alaska, installed all the water and waste water that's going in up there. And we have a lot of research up there. We have a lot of climate research going on, and about five or six different departments in the USDA are involved in Arctic studies or expenditures or programs of one kind or another. So that's also happening.

I'm going to stop there and let you ask questions because I know we handed you a couple of our monthly reports. We do monthly reports every month for the secretary. You get those monthly reports. If there is something that you think we should be talking about that's not in there, we'd like to know that. The other thing that you don't have, we were asked, the Office of Tribal Relations was asked for the first time to contribute requirements for the secretary's whiteboard initiative. The secretary likes data. If you've ever heard him speak, he comes out and he just talks numbers. It's all on his head. He gets those numbers by collecting data from all of our agencies on what they call the Whiteboard. And what that is, is every agency every month decides what they're going to collect data on to tell him about, to keep him up to speed on what's happening in USDA: how many awards we've given, how many people are being affected, how many jobs we've saved and so forth.

There is a really, really big difficulty collecting information on the funding that goes out to tribes, tribal organizations and tribal citizens. It doesn't get reported on a regular basis. So every time the secretary goes somewhere, we end up in this big swirl trying to get the information out of the agencies. And so what we're trying to do is to create a system where that information is being produced more regularly, whether it's quarterly or every six months, so that we've got it in hand or he's got it in hand. Our agencies don't have to go back to their people and beat them up for the information because they're already producing it. It's a bit up of a lift for the department because some of our folks collect the information at the end of the year but they don't collect it in the interim. We can't tell Indian country how USDA is doing in Indian country if we don't have the numbers. So I'm going to stop with that and ask if there are any questions.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, Jerry.

Jerry McPeak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. All this comes as a surprise. I have questions. I am not as knowledgeable about FRTEP as obviously I'm going to be in about a month, but I think you helped me yesterday. Maybe the rest of them don't know this either but that money comes from --

Leslie Wheelock: The Federally Recognized Tribal Extension Program - otherwise known as FRTEP - is funded out of NIFA, N-I-F-A, which is -- help me there.

John Lowery: The National Institute of Food and Ag.

Leslie Wheelock: I'm horrible with these things.

Jerry McPeak: Good. Make me proud of you.

Leslie Wheelock: Yeah. Thank you. And so that money, it's in a competitive grant fund. So it funds 37 different tribal agents, if you will, working as extension agents for our tribes. It's a competitive program. Those people have to compete for their jobs every two years. They compete by submitting projects to NIFA. Those people are, as far as I'm concerned, in many of our reservations a salt to the earth. They're the only people around doing any kind of extension work, and they are spread very thin. I've never heard of a FRTEP person having extra people able to work for them. Because they get a project and they might get a project manager, but they usually don't have more than another person working with them because the funding is not that good.

We have been trying to work on pulling -- that funding is in a line item under Smith-Lever, which I know you don't know anything about and I know less than that. But for some reason, it's in a competitive line item instead of a noncompetitive line item where it would be easier to increase the funding and

increase the potential for the number of agents and take it out of the competitiveness that it is right now. Those people work super, super hard for about a year and the next year they spend a lot of their time re-competing for the funding so that they can continue in those jobs.

Jerry McPeak: Follow up. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the explanation. I guess we need to hold back. I think I've told much. I've never heard of that lady. I've never seen that lady. There's probably not even one in our area or in the Muscogee Creek Nation that's more involved with kids than I am. My question is - for the rest of you who have a FRTEP person, don't sugarcoat it - are the ones you have any good? Some of them are good and some of them aren't like the normal kind of legislators up there. What's the situation in the real world?

Leslie Wheelock: Do any of you know whether or not you have a FRTEP agent?

Mark Wadsworth: As I understand the FRTEP program, it's that the FRTEP agents also are further even taken away directly from the tribe if you have a problem with them because a lot of them are actually employees of the land-grant institution for your state. So you have that sort of angle to go at too where the funding goes through the university. If you had a problem and a complaint, you would have to talk to their bosses through

the university system rather than having that direct correlation to the tribe as being a possible tribal employee.

Jerry McPeak: That's what I thought.

Mark Wadsworth: And that's I think kind of where you're looking.

Jerry McPeak: Yeah. Of course, as you gathered from yesterday, our situation is really good from the standpoint that we're vested in this thing big. But her office, she has an office that was given to her. There [indiscernible] office but elected to go out there because quite often the pressure got too great that it looking too good. So we'll take on that. May I have another deal on a different subject?

Mark Wadsworth: Okay.

Jerry McPeak: This is something you and I talked a little bit about. You asked me a question and I don't know for sure where it came from. I didn't find out last night but I tried. We have a directive - it's not the right word - suggestion that a lot of my schools are having to follow it, the 400 calories in a meal. The last one came out from someone. The reason I think the purpose of it, the Muscogee Chamber of Commerce was there yesterday in the Capitol and they had that deal about the food thing and about fruits and vegetables. You guys, don't get me wrong. I'm not against fruits and vegetables. But this directive came out, or whatever it's called, suggesting that you

eat these things. Red meat was not included. It was intentionally omitted. I've got a problem with that. I've got a problem with 400 calories. And my schools have a problem with that.

We are lying and cheating in our schools to feed our children. Because we have children arrive in the morning that haven't had anything to eat, and we're going to feed those little suckers. The president or whoever it is can just get over it because we're going to feed them in the morning. We're going to feed them at noon. My wife has a project that we finance where on Fridays, we send a bag home with food for certain ones. We're going to feed them. Those folks up there need to get out here where the poor folks really are because 400 calories is bull.

Leslie Wheelock: If I may.

Jerry McPeak: Yes. You sure may, ma'am.

Leslie Wheelock: My request would be to make sure that all of your schools are participating in all of the nutrition programs offered by USDA for the school kids, so breakfast, lunch, snack. There's even a dinner.

Jerry McPeak: We're all over it.

Leslie Wheelock: They have to eat it at school because of the potential that they're taking it home.

Jerry McPeak: I'm sorry to interrupt you. Our public schools here do a great job, but they're also under attack by - no offense for those of you out there - but they're also under attack by Republicans. They're trying to take money out of the public schools, send it to private schools with vouchers and all that kind of junk. Aren't your schools - wherever you're from in Oklahoma - about feeding them? The little dudes get off their bus and we feed them. Come lunch, and we feed them. They come at 3:00, and we feed the little suckers. If they'll stay until when mom and dad can pick them up later, we'll feed them again after school, don't we? We feed the little dudes.

But 400 calories for lunch is crazy. I'm not sure who does that or where it does that, but you've got a problem. I've been told that the Department of Agriculture was involved in that decision making. And particularly that we're saying that we're not including red meat. If you'd go and talk about Native American, I'm pretty dad-gum sure we're going to need bows and arrows to shoot apples. That was a different dude that shot off the top of someone's head or in the morning bananas. We don't have any oranges so I'm not sure. Acorns didn't shoot them out. So I'm pretty dad-gum sure those buffalo were red meat. They weren't as fat, that's what we're feeding them, and so you can make those little kids eat that lean meat if you want to. But me, I just ordered the fattest piece of steak I could get last

night. And if I just live to be 90, that will be all right.  
Follow up, one more. BIE schools, those are what?

Leslie Wheelock: Bureau of Indian Education.

Jerry McPeak: Okay. Those are like?

Leslie Wheelock: BIA schools. You would have called them BIA schools probably. They separated BIA and BIE into two separate functional areas. I guess that's the best way to describe it. But those are the Bureau of Indian Education, still part of Bureau of Indian Affairs schools.

Jerry McPeak: Okay. All right. Thank you.

Leslie Wheelock: You're welcome.

Jerry McPeak: Thank you, sir.

Mark Wadsworth: Isn't BIE schools also a part of the Department of Interior funding?

Leslie Wheelock: They are.

Mark Wadsworth: So BIA and BIE are both funded through DOI.

Male Voice: There's something we call grant schools. That might be a clarification. I don't know. But that's another thing. They're known as grant schools because they're grant-funded through BIE. I don't know if that cleared it up any for you or not.

Jerry McPeak: All right. Thank you. Pardon me. Mr. Chairman, if I may.

Mark Wadsworth: Go ahead, Jerry.

Jerry McPeak: The Choctaws have Jones Academy. We don't really have schools. We had one time had a school. Now the kids just bus into Hartshorne which is all right. The Cherokees have, it sounds like Sequoyah. But we still have boarding schools. We have boarding schools.

Leslie Wheelock: Yes, there are still boarding schools around the country.

Jerry McPeak: And those are BIE schools probably.

Leslie Wheelock: Most of them, I think, are BIE schools. Angela, do you know what the schools are that they send the Alaska Native high schoolers to, whether they're BIE schools or some other?

Angela Peter: [Indiscernible]. As far as I know, there are other schools that are chartered in Anchorage.

Jerry McPeak: Do you have those in Alaska? Do you have in Alaska boarding schools?

Angela Peter: Well, yeah, we have boarding schools, but they're not BIA. As far as I know, they are private and charter.

Jerry McPeak: They're what?

Angela Peter: Charter.

Jerry McPeak: Really? Now if you want to get to charter schools, I got another bone to pick.

Mark Wadsworth: Gilbert Harrison.

Gilbert Harrison: Thank you. Gilbert Harrison here from Navajo. In Navajo, we have within the bureau three different types of schools. One is the traditional BIE run and controlled schools, boarding schools. There's another one that's called grant school. They operate under a little different regulation. Finally, we have schools that are six or eight contracted out. They're all a little bit different. We've been trying to get them to be consistent in their curriculum, how they handle it because right now, in New Mexico and Arizona where we live, there's a move to go to core education to do this annual appraisal. So it's hard if you have three different schools under one BIE system. Thank you very much.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, Jerry.

Jerry McPeak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I may expound on this just a little bit more because I think it's something important to those of us who are sitting here. Because I like listening to Mark about the range and because I like listening to somebody from someplace else, because of the experience I'm having up here in the Capitol, I'm gaining knowledge about charter schools. If I may extend, okay? As you evaluate charter schools, because as tribal people we kind of tend to say we want a charter school because we want to teach our own culture and so on and so forth, so we want a charter school.

In our areas, what the charter school does is it takes students out of the public schools, and the money follows them out of that public school. I'd be willing to bet you that they're not taking the below average students to the charter school. They're taking the really good students out [sic] of the charter school because that looks good, and there's something to that, because you can advance them and go at a faster pace. I get that. But when you take the money out of the public school and move it to the charter school, you've just taken this cow over here that's already under-funded and you're not feeding her as much as you were. You're taking feed out of her too. Those average children and below average children now have less resources than they had to compete with the people that I say can make it by themselves.

My position, so you'll know, is not a popular one. It's not one of the majority. I am, if not the voice, one of the two stronger voices in the state legislature about Native Americans. My stance would not be a popular one. But also, it is my belief that it's deeper thought with more experience.

Billy Haltom that you heard yesterday, his ACT score -- by the way, 35 is perfect. His ACT score wasn't 35, nor was it 30, nor was it 25, nor was it 20, nor was it 19 where you can get into universities. His ACT score was 14. The kid ain't bad. Doing pretty good. That's the one. Pretty productive, ain't

he, Chris? Pretty good hand, and we recruit a lot of those kids. They are good kids. While this one, what are you asking him to do?

But the charter school thing, I hope as you each go back to your areas and you think about the charter schools - and they're sold to you and they will be sold to you - you recognize that if you do it like Oklahoma is where that money follows that child, then you're taking -- we have community after community that's predominantly Native American kids and you take some of those out of there and you take the money out of that, there is no way for that public school getting more money. The charter school can. In fact, we have for-profit charter schools now in Oklahoma. So if we have the tax money moving from tax-based school and that's a for-profit charter school, they're using part of my money for their profit. That's a problem for me.

Thank you for allowing me the time to give you, as I like to say, that is not my opinion. All those things are fact. You can make up your own mind about what you want to do in that situation. On the positive side, those charter schools can take those outstanding students and really, really make them shine and really make them go. They can advance them. I mean they can do those things. But I also believe that we owe something to maybe the *Jim* that doesn't shine. Thank you for your indulgence.

Mark Wadsworth: Just one last thing about the FRTEP too before we get off on that subject. If you have the FRTEP extension person on your reservation, they also have the door open to them to go and apply for other grants either under the university system that they have or actually utilizing the tribe that they work for. So there is always that door open for them to further expand their offices and expand their opportunities for the community that they serve. I just kind of want to put that out there. It seems to me that some of the more progressive ones are really utilizing that system rather than just totally taking FRTEP without any other --

Jerry McPeak: You guys are sold on FRTEP. I'm sold on FRTEP. I'm sold in the system. I love it. I think it's a great thing. Because perhaps it hasn't been ideal in our situation, it doesn't mean it's not good. I think it's a really good thing. Go get them. But I'm going to go get them on our deal a little differently.

Leslie Wheelock: If I may, Mr. Chairman. The FRTEP program would be far more productive if it weren't competitive, if it had more funding, and if we had more boots on the ground with our tribes. Thank you, sir.

Mark Wadsworth: Just one question for Gilbert. We made a recommendation for one of the Native American colleges to be

under the OTR. Could you expound upon that from one of our recommendations to have that?

Leslie Wheelock: At the last meeting, the recommendation?

Male Voice: Yes.

Leslie Wheelock: So at the last meeting the recommendation was made to, if I may shorten what it was, essentially move the 1994 tribal college and university programs under the Office of Tribal Relations. We have a letter that is moving through approval in answer to that recommendation. Our office has also walked the idea around the department, and I'm scheduling a meeting with our deputy secretary's office when I get back. Because one of the hurdles that we're running into is those programs that are funded through congressional appropriations. We are probably not going to be able to move everything together under the Office of Tribal Relations, but that doesn't mean that the Office of Tribal Relations cannot be an umbrella organization for all of the tribal college and university activities that are going on in the USDA.

So what we're trying to do is to kind of solidify all of the programs. There are at least five different agencies that have programs working with the schools. We have a paper moving through for comment among those agencies that asks for people to be assigned, people who are currently working in those programs to be assigned to the Office of Tribal Relations in part because

this Generation Indigenous activity is impacting our ability to get a lot of our other work done because there is such a huge focus on it. Every time we get a question, we have to scramble in order to get information, in order to support what's going on, in order to get our information up to the White House.

And so what we're trying to do is to move the people while keeping the jobs active where they are right now because they have the support funding within their organizations to actually administer those programs. We do not have the support funding in the Office of Tribal Relations to run those programs and the Congress has to approve all appropriations movement after the secretary approves the appropriations movement. So we're kind of taking it in a two-step fashion or at least proposing taking it in a two-step fashion first by becoming the umbrella organization for the tribal schools and then we would follow that with how do we move appropriations and will the department support that movement.

Mark Wadsworth: Would it be much of a push? And this is just an open idea of moving that NIFA line item from FRTEP to the OTR.

Leslie Wheelock: What we're trying to do with that line item is to put it -- right now it would be a push because of where it is in the Appropriations Bill. If that item could be pushed into a noncompetitive line item, there are a couple of

concerns about that. One is that once you put it into a noncompetitive line item, it sticks out more than it does now and it's very easy to zero out. But the other potential for it is that it could be moved into a more dynamic space where it can get more funding and potentially be moved over into the Office of Tribal Relations. That line item, by the way, most of it is direct appropriations to the schools. It includes the school endowments. Actually that's a different line item. FRTEP is different. I'm not going to go there. I retract that last statement. Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: Gilbert.

Gilbert Harrison: Thank you. Leslie, just a couple of requests. We used to get your monthly one liners saying this is what we're doing. That was really good. I'd like to ask maybe you guys can start that back up again. We haven't heard anything for a while.

Leslie Wheelock: Okay. We do send out those monthly newsletters. I don't know how often. John, do those go out the week after we sent them to the secretary?

John Lowery: We do not send these monthly reports out to anyone as far as outside of the secretary. What we have done is include them in the binder here so you've got the January and the February one here in your binder. We're going to be working

on the March one on Monday, but we can definitely send that to you via email.

Gilbert Harrison: The last thing is last summer when we met in Washington, D.C., I think the Forest Service informed us that they were updating some of their rules and regulations. They said it would be out some time by now. Do you have any information on the status of that? Because we're interested in some of the things that they're going to be changing. I think several issues have been identified as being an obstacle. Thank you very much.

Leslie Wheelock: The Forest Service directives are moving through regulatory approvals. We're at this point trying to prevent -- the Office of Management and Budget has asked that multiple departments in the federal government review them, which would take even longer to get them out than they've already taken to get out. The review process for almost all of our regulations is rather lengthy and a lot longer than would be useful. But I signed a letter this week asking that those regulations be restricted to USDA approval so that we can get them out.

The other thing that you should be aware of is that there's a water directive, a Forest Service groundwater directive that has been paused as I read this morning in order to gather state and tribal review of it because it was moving a little too

quickly and apparently the states objected. We got a note from the Native American Rights Fund yesterday asking when the tribal consultation and collaboration was going to be established for that rule as well.

Mark Wadsworth: Thank you, Leslie. Really thank you.

Jerry McPeak: Mr. Chairman.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, Jerry.

Jerry McPeak: This is a good time. Along those lines, I can tell you that she works in both official and unofficial opportunities to accomplish that goal that you asked about. She's watching for every opportunity. She did a thing yesterday. That was the way we'd handle it to go get it done, every opportunity to get a pry bar in there and open that deal up a little bit when they're not expected.

Mark Wadsworth: On to the next line item, and we move this to the Keepseagle for Sarah Vogel.

Sarah Vogel: This will be a rather brief report. I think we've had Keepseagle summaries at every single meeting of this council and a really good one last time by Christine Webber. Unfortunately neither Christine nor Joel could be with us today, so I'm going to be the designated hitter on this.

The final issue that remains unresolved from the settlement is how to distribute the remaining unclaimed settlement funds known as the Cy Pres Funds. There's disagreement about how

those funds should be used. One agreement that the Class Counsel, the USDA would favor is that the fund should be used to endow a trust that would be overseen by native leaders. That would provide grants to nonprofits, that would serve Native American farmers, and ranchers, and youth up to 20 years from the creation of the foundation. The other point of view is that the remaining fund should be distributed to the successful claimants as an additional distribution. That issue is now before the court. It's in briefing, and we hope for a ruling sometime this year. Until that ruling comes and it's final, no funds can be distributed at all. That's the report.

Gilbert Harrison: Sarah, I have a couple of questions on that that popped up a couple of weeks ago at another meeting. These remaining funds, as they sit there, are they earning any interest whatsoever?

Sarah Vogel: They're earning minimal interest. Under a court order, they have to be invested in super safe vehicles. So they earn some interest, but is not the same as it would earn as if it were invested by the foundation if there were a foundation.

Jerry McPeak: In defense of that, the banking funds are only earning like 1.5 to 2 percent sometimes. So minimal interest now is different than it would be if you were just answering that at a time --

Gilbert Harrison: And the other question that arose was that there were some people that were nominated to be trustees. The question that came up: Was there a call for that? Was there a period of nomination? How were they recommended?

Sarah Vogel: Pursuant to a suggestion by the court summer before last, we had a series of I think it was eight or nine meetings throughout the country. We sent a letter to every claimant, and every organization, and every entity we had contact with in press releases and so on talking about these public meetings. The purpose of the public meetings was to get feedback on this concept of a foundation or a trust and also to call for nominations. We got over 100 nominations. They came from a variety of sources, a variety of organizations. And from those 100 and all the contacts that we had, we sifted through them because we wanted to have representation throughout the country and people with different expertise.

So some time ago, shortly after we turned in the unopposed motion to create the foundation - it was unopposed by USDA, that is - a week later, we submitted the slate of 13 nominees. I think Gil has been there. But anybody who wants to learn a little bit more about the proposed foundation or the proposed slate of nominees can go to the Keepseagle website, which is Indian Farm Class, and there's a section called Cy Pres. I see Gil nodding because when he gave his presentation, he went

there. It has links to all of the key documents that have been filed in the court and, for example, you can link to the slate of nominees to find out who they are and what their background is. So there are 13 of those and they would be appointed. If they are appointed, they need approval of the court. If they are appointed, at first they would have staggered board terms and then three-year terms after that.

Mark Wadsworth: Thank you, Sarah. That information that you sent to me about the website and all, I was able to share it with some of the members from the southwest. We had a conference in San Carlos, and they very much appreciate it. I myself, I wasn't aware of those websites. It does have a lot of good information, so thank you very much.

Sarah Vogel: Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: Thank you, Sarah. I appreciate that. Since we have some time here, we also have some important guests in the audience and I'd like to introduce them since we're in Oklahoma and honor these people, and maybe we could hear a few words from you. The first person is Supreme Court Justice for Oklahoma Yvonne Kauger. She's been at the Justice since 1984 here in the office. She hosts every year the Sovereign Symposium here in Oklahoma. It's a fairly big event and hundreds of people do attend every year. She's extremely pro-native and has proved that in the past. Also, she's the co-

founder of Red Earth, another Native American event here in Oklahoma that draws not only people from the Native Americans in this state but from several states across the United States.

And I guess you were raised here.

Yvonne Kauger: Fourth generation.

Jerry McPeak: Colony, Oklahoma.

Mark Wadsworth: If you'd like to say a few words, we'd sure appreciate it.

Yvonne Kauger: Well, I'm Yvonne Kauger. I'm fourth generation Oklahoman from Colony, Oklahoma. Colony is the oldest town in Western Oklahoma. It was founded for the Cheyenne-Arapaho, one of the Indian schools where they rounded up the children and cut off their hair and took their clothes away from them and washed their mouths out with soap if they tried to speak their native language. It was the oldest vocational agricultural school in the nation at the time. There were 84 buildings, and now there's a water tower left. But I did go to a grade school and high school in the buildings built by the Cheyenne-Arapaho for that school.

My daddy was a town boy. He and Archie Blackowl - I don't know how many of you may be familiar with Archie, a master artist of the Cheyenne - threw rocks at each other. Archie was down in the school and my daddy was a town boy, but they became best friends for life. Archie was the impetus really for my

gallery in Colony and for Red Earth. He was my first featured artist. When my daughter got married 90 days before Archie died, he came and we had lithographs of a rabbit dancer painting. Archie signed and numbered all of those, and those were the wedding invitations for her wedding. I think that my affiliation and my love of native peoples goes back to my great grandfather. My daddy's mother died when he was 6 months old. My great grandfather, who was a German immigrant from Russia, hired the Cheyenne women to be his nannies. My daddy was raised by Cheyenne women.

I'm really lucky that Minnie Cross [phonetic] had a picture that she had taken of her mother, a Hellingman [phonetic] woman, with my daddy tucked up on her shoulder and wrapped in her blanket. And little Herman Haury, who grew up to be a chief for the Arapaho, also in the photograph. When I was a little girl, they were still dancing in the summertime at sacred tribal grounds. If you want to be a Cheyenne-Arapaho chief, you have to go to my hometown - Colony, Oklahoma. Rick West, who was the founding director of the Museum of the American-Indian, was made a Cheyenne chief. But he had to come to Colony to do that.

I've had many memories there. I still remember probably the last horse giveaway at a wedding. And when my daddy came back from World War II, they gave a powwow for the veterans. The women who had raised him were sitting on those little

benches there. As my daddy danced in, they said, "Oh, look at Johnny. He can still dance." Well, I never really learned to dance. My mother would retrieve me from the powwow grounds. When I was adopted by the Cheyenne-Arapaho in 1984, my daddy was quiet. He knew what an honor it was. And my mother said she couldn't understand why I wanted to do that. I had two perfectly good parents. After the dance, and she had retrieved me from powwow grounds. After the ceremony was over, I went over to her and said, "Well, what did you think?" And she said to me, "You still haven't learned how to dance." I can't hit it on the off-beat or the off off-beat. Barbara Po [phonetic] told me that it didn't really matter. They know I can't dance. It didn't really matter if I couldn't dance. That if my feet weren't in the right spot, she knew that my heart was, and so that's what counted.

This June 3rd and 4th we will do the 28th Annual Sovereignty Symposium, and it is the largest Indian law seminar in the United States. It's coupled with Red Earth because people who come to this seminar, the Sovereignty Symposium, don't get anything but a t-shirt. Representative McPeak, who invited me here today, can testify by that. And I will tell you that he is raucous. I don't know if he's behaving here or not. But Kyle and I, and I want to introduce Kyle Shifflett, Kyle's been with me 21 years. He's from Thomas, Oklahoma. It really

[indiscernible] for those of you who are Oklahomans. We think that back in the distant history, we probably were related because both of our families started out in Alsace-Lorraine and ended up in Western Oklahoma. But I'm very honored to have Kyle here with me. He is the book producer for all the materials. Did Janie Hipp show up yesterday?

Female Voice: Yeah.

Yvonne Kauger: Well, Janie and I go back a long way since she is a frequent presenter at the Sovereignty Symposium. So I would invite all of you to come. We will have wonderful speakers. And as I said, Kyle and I were in the hall and Representative McPeak was presenting last year and there was just this wild laughter that was sustained. So I don't know what goes on in there, but evidently it's quite enjoyable. So I would invite all of you to come. It's going to be really well done, I think, this year. The Baroness of Winterbourne will be our keynote speaker.

Emma Nicholson has been appointed for the last year-and-a-half as the business envoy to Iraq, and she has worked with the Marsh tribes in Iraq for years. She also is a member of the House of Lords, and Kyle and I were privileged to get to go sit on the House of Lords and have lunch in the House of Lords dining room. When we left from our tour with Emma, she said during World War II they bombed the parliament and they had to

restore it and they lost many treasures. And she said so people had to donate things to the House of Parliament when we rebuilt it. There was this painting that was as big as this whole wall, and she said, "I did want you to see that painting. It was in daddy's attic." So I urge you to come and see Emma. She has been here before. She was really well-received. And I hope that you'll come.

We brought you things. We brought you brochures about the Supreme Court which we're doing our second one, our updated one now. So this one is from last year. We also brought you posters of Buffalo Calf Woman, the Cheyenne warrior woman, the only woman who was imprisoned at Fort Marion. She actually rode with her husband and killed a German man, his name was German, in Kansas. A hundred years later, the German family and the Standing Bear family had a reconciliation ceremony. We will have a panel this year for the second or third year in which the Methodist Church is doing reconciliation ceremonies because of the part that one of their ministers played at Sand Creek. And so I invite you all to come. There will be a wonderful reception.

For the first time we're doing a play, Representative McPeak. We're going to do Suzan Harjo who was named the Presidential Medal winner. She has co-written this play about Jim Thorpe, which is a short play. We're going to have that.

We'll be down at the Skirvin, then we'll be back up at our building for the play and for reception with great food. So please come. Thank you for this opportunity to be here.

Male Voice: Ma'am, where did you say the symposium was held at?

Yvonne Kauger: Skirvin Hotel.

Sarah Vogel: This is Sarah. I've been to that symposium with Janie. I was on a panel with Janie some years ago. I just thought it was fabulous, just absolutely fabulous. So thank you.

Yvonne Kauger: Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: We'll have a quick 10-minute break here, and then we'll go into the next session.

Next on the agenda for Choctaw Nation's agricultural operation will be Shannon McDaniel. He's in the tribal management section. Thank you, Shannon.

Shannon McDaniel: Thank you to all of you for allowing me to be here today. It's great to be able to come and talk about the Choctaw Nation and what we're doing in the agriculture program. Most all of our programs are starting to deal with agriculture in some aspect, even our food distribution programs.

A little bit about myself. I've been with the tribe for 27 years. I'm a tribal member. I have worked in everything from the health side of things to the social side of things to now

the agriculture. The last probably 15 years, I worked in the chief's office dealing with administrative stuff so it was really nice to get back out into the field. Hopefully I finish up my career in the agricultural side over the next 5 to 10 years and maybe be able to retire at some point. I don't know that I want to do that, but that's probably what's going to happen to all of us at some point.

The tribe has put a strong initiative into developing the agriculture side of the tribe. Right now we have about 85,000 acres within the tribe that is not trust property, that is mostly just property that the tribe has acquired in the last probably 15 years. Of that grazing, about 50 percent of that property is grazable. The rest of it is timberlands. With that being said, we have a timber side to the property and we have an agricultural side, which some of that is farming. Some of it is cattle production. The tribe has now made an investment in the last year and increased our cattle herd up to about 2,000 mama cows, we were at about 400. Right now we're in the process of selling our feeders. We've got somewhere right around 600 feeders that's going to the feedlots this next week.

The tribe has been fortunate not to have to borrow any money to purchasing those cattle. They've all been raised on property. We didn't go out and buy any of these feeders. This year alone, we've actually raised them. So that's been

something that we've been fortunate. We've now figured cost to goods sold and everything on those, and it's a very good profit for the tribe. Actually the tribe should exceed about 60 percent profit on those animals. So that's something good. That's way better than investing your money in the stock market or in the banks and, as she said early, site money which tribes have so long had to do putting stuff in trust and everything, but with that being said, we're starting to try to reach out to tribal members. The tribe has now applied for a grant to start an extension program that we will continue to maintain, and we will do that program whether we receive money from the Feds or not. We're going to go ahead and start that program.

In that program with Porter, one of your members here, he is a tribal member also of the Choctaw Nation. You know we're wanting to do some more tribal member building. A lot of people used to call it coop-ing. I don't really like the word "coop." I like tribal member building. And what we want to do is we want to share the things that we, as a tribe, have with the tribal members because it's basically theirs. You know what a tribe has is its tribal members, but we're wanting to start sharing bulls. We've developed a herd that we want to start calling a Choctaw-branded beef, which a lot of the other tribes have done.

It just so happened they had already developed an Angus herd so we've kind of continued with that. We'd now brought in some registered Herefords, you know, starting to mix that herd out to get the quality of beef that would be needed out there and, thus, and what performs well in the areas that we have to raise beef in. As Porter can tell you, we're very diverse in what our property looks like from one end to the other. We have some mountain terrain that has some good pasture but the soil is really shallow. We have some of the best probably farmland in Oklahoma on the Red River.

So talking about that in our cows, it's different on how they perform and how we have at the end of the time. We'll vary a hundred pounds on what those cattle actually are when we get ready to sell just based on where they came from. So with that being said, the tribe purchased another 400 acres at Hugo, Oklahoma to make a finishing facility there for cattle soil. We're bringing everything in there. About the last two months that we have them, we finished them out. We know what we've got, when we've started video and started sending out to the feed lots. When we've start calling to sell, we can tell them exactly what the weights are. We pull the weights on certified scales, so we took it from just an operation into a true statistical operation. And with that, the tribe is now starting to look at putting our brand of beef in our community centers

for our senior citizens. We are going to be looking at probably doing about 50,000 pounds a year of ground beef. We'll retain the primes to sell to our restaurants and everything within the tribe.

So that's where we're going. We are looking at going to about 4,000 head of mama cows. We're going to quite -- it takes us about two years to get there because we're having to open up some property we have. We haven't put some fences around it. This last year alone, we've put in about 38 miles of perimeter fencing. So that's just from the fact that it had been neglected and those fences hadn't been kept up. So when you started having to do some surveys, you started having to clean out fence lines. It's just time consuming, but we've been able to hire about 40 additional tribal members. Of 50 people we've hired in the last year, all but one of those have been tribal members.

So that's something we're proud of. We have worked with the University of Arkansas, OSU here in Oklahoma, starting that to identify Choctaw students or getting Choctaw students into those programs to start bringing those ag-related program students back to the areas. So we are trying to create jobs for them also. That's sort of where we're at in the ag program. I know they said 10 minutes, I don't want to go over that but I'll open it up to any questions or I'll touch on anything that may

be I didn't hit on. We just got a lot going on in there, it's hard to hit everything.

Mark Wadsworth: Question or two for myself. When you started this enterprise, did you charter it as its own entity or is it under the business enterprise system of the tribe?

Shannon McDaniel: It is under the business enterprise of the tribe. It wasn't previously when it was such a small operation. It was more of a government operation. It was funded mostly by BIA. But we did in the last year, we had changed it up into a business operation. They do report to the business committee which I am a member of that business committee. So they do have a tad of individual budgets for each property. They have to show cost of goods sold on each product. So we have changed that into a truly profit-driven business.

Mark Wadsworth: Under the umbrella of the tribe and the tribal enterprise system, do you apply for EQIP for your cross fencing and some of your range improvements, water developments and stuff? Have you been able to utilize that?

Shannon McDaniel: Yes, we do. We have been successful on that. Even in the new property we acquired. We've acquired a little over 45,000 acres in the last three years. Those are all now on the EQIP programs. We are benefiting from that in our previous property. We had benefited from all of the things you just talked about, from fencing, cross fencing to water to

noxious weeds, to the whole gamut. We do a plot for that. We had been successful in acquiring all of those funds.

Mark Wadsworth: And have you run into any of their limitations to you as being a business entity?

Shannon McDaniel: We have not run in any of those. They've been very helpful. Just to the opposite with us when we call with a question especially with the state people, it's been very helpful with Gary O'Neill and the different ones. It's really good to have an open dialogue with him. You can just call him and they'll call you right back, you know, with Ryan and everyone even in the USDA side. They've been on the property. We've invited them to come down. They come down. And it's not just been the workers in the area, the state directors came down.

Mark Wadsworth: The reason why I'm saying this is that I just like tribes to understand that as long as your operating under the business entity of the tribal umbrella, you virtually have unlimited amount of access to the funding through EQIP; whereas other non-Indian operations strictly, they may have a \$35,000 or \$45,000 that they can only get through each practice may be per year. Whereas with tribes, they're able to divvy that up basically based on your tribal individual memberships because your tribal members are each owners of that.

So if you have, for instance, a thousand tribal members and the limitation was 40,000 or a thousand times 40,000 or 40 million, so it's just a really a good program for tribes to really get involved with and to improve your property. It does probably improve your appraisal value and your AUM rates if you do.

Shannon McDaniel: Well, it just helps the money that the tribe appropriate. It helps go two to three times further than what you initially intended. I mean it's nice to have those appropriations from the tribe, but it's also nice to be able to show EQIP and everything. "Hey, we've got this money set aside. How can you help us?" As long as you had your application turned in in time, they'd be more than willing to come out and be on the property. I would say they're probably on our property. You know the county agents are there once to twice a month helping us identify new projects, how do we propose this. Yeah, there's some money here that you can look at that. You know we're right now looking at mulching money, how to go in and mulch. There's actually money there for that. We had no idea.

They actually brought that up to us so I think it's just being willing to have them on your property and sharing your information with them. And then within the State of Oklahoma, we have a really good tribal liaison also with Dr. Carol Crouch and to the USDA. I feel like we've probably got some of the

easiest ways to get to them, and I think that's all about relationships and trusts and I think that's been developed and so I think you can go a long ways.

Mark Wadsworth: And just one final note and maybe you've looked into that, but there's been some talk of tribe's trying to have their dispersion of their profits. If they have a profit and you're paying it to your individual membership to utilize the OST TAMP [sounds like] system. Because if it was paid through the TAMP system, then we do not have to worry about as tribal members the tax implications through a kind of a per cap versus that. And I haven't heard of anybody who's really stepped through that door and went through it but I'm really curious.

Shannon McDaniel: We have the TAMP system but we haven't used it for that so we do it on trust side.

Male Voice: Mr. Chairman?

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, question?

Male Voice: We see some tribes take your approach and have a tribal herd but other tribes encourage individual tribal members to have their own herds. Could you talk to me about the pros and cons if your group had that conversation and why you decided to do a tribal herd?

Shannon McDaniel: We have talked about that. We have had that conversation. We encourage both. That's the reason we

want to take our bulls. We want to build a collection stage. We want to help people AI. You just can't loan bulls out, but you can help them AI their herds. You know, much smaller herds are easier to AI than larger herds so the majority of our farmers and ranchers being smaller based on their land size. And so that's what we've taken the approach. It's not one or the other, its both. And so we want to help those individual tribal members understand. So with the extension program, we think that will help because we've already identified the fractionated properties - the trust properties that's not in use - so that we're leasing out for them.

We want to go and meet with those tribal members and ask is there a way that we could get them back into production themselves and maybe help them get to the right government programs, to the right things to help them start their own up. Then maybe we assist them in that but get them back to where they're actually individual, and then maybe the tribe can help them get into the right markets to get the maximum out of their products.

Male Voice: Well, I see if I could, a follow up question. So if they start an individual herd, could they participate in your branded beef or is that just strictly to tribe?

Shannon McDaniel: That's why we would want them to do is to participate, because we would want to give them the genetics

that we've identified. We would want to put that into their herds so that more than 51 percent of their herd is that genetic so that we could brand it Choctaw-branded beef.

Mark Wadsworth: Go ahead, Ed.

Edward Soza: On your fencing you said you did 38 miles [Indiscernible]. Were you able to utilize any NRCS funding?

Shannon McDaniel: Not for the perimeter fencing but for the cross fencing, yes we were.

Edward Soza: You did use it for the cross fencing?

Shannon McDaniel: Yes. We have this year, right now, we were funded for -- don't hold me but it's a little over 10 miles, I think, this year and that's on three different properties. But it is all interior fencing.

Male Voice: [Indiscernible].

Shannon McDaniel: Through the EQIP program, we were allowed to.

Male Voice: Only perimeter?

Shannon McDaniel: But now it is only 50 percent. We have to cost share that, the other 50 percent. Let me make sure I clarify that.

Mark Wadsworth: And as a part of that improved practice, did you utilize the CSP program for better grazing to also give an added --?

Shannon McDaniel: We do use that.

Mark Wadsworth: -- incentive of another payment in addition to the EQIP?

Shannon McDaniel: Yes. We typically receive \$150,000 a year in CSP money. It's tipping [sounds like] about average year for us. Next year, we'll increase because we've added some more additional property that we purchased into that so I think that will probably increase.

Leslie Wheelock: Mr. Chairman?

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, Leslie?

Leslie Wheelock: This is Leslie Wheelock. Shannon, a couple of things about slaughter. I know you've been looking into slaughter facilities, but I think this year you also did some work around local slaughter in order to get a better price.

Shannon McDaniel: We did.

Leslie Wheelock: And how did you do that?

Shannon McDaniel: What we did is we took some hard strength and went to different slaughter facilities working with them. In within our area we only have a state certified facility not necessarily USDA certified, but we are working, and the USDA is willing to come in and start inspecting with certain numbers. So right now we're getting ready to go on a visit with these on Eastern Oklahoma State College and start working with them in a process to see if they would be willing to process some of our beef for branded product.

Now on the slaughter facility you're talking about, we have a feasibility study that's been funded by an RBOG that came from USDA. It was \$100,000. We were one of the few in Oklahoma that received that. But that feasibility study has not been completed at this time. It's probably got about another three or four weeks. So we would be willing to share that once it's done. But it also includes a feed lot along with them. And that's a little bit of a challenge because typically, feed lots in our area with the humidity here are about 45 pounds less per unit when they get finished. But if we raise our own feed, we can probably offset that cost of weight gain with the commodity product of feed. So we're looking at that, see how that works out, and then we've made some contact with some other tribes.

Mark Wadsworth: Jerry McPeak.

Jerry McPeak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Having round a feed yard in Dodge City, Kansas and come back to this country thinking that might work, I know you think your soil is shallow, but with 60 inches of rainfall, dude, you better get on a high place because mud is horrible on those feed yards. They stomp that stuff in and that's one of the big reasons why we can't feed down here, so I don't know how you're going to do it. But it's the water that's tough --

Shannon McDaniel: We're still not sure. We've identified one piece of property that has the drainage that would probably

be necessary but I'm still not sure how that's going to work. I'm just saying that's a possibility and we may still do a small but not a commercial size. And it may be more of a finishing yard than a true feed line. But I would love to talk to you about that because we've tried to talk to people that's been in it, so I want to bend your ear on that.

Mark Wadsworth: Thank you, Shannon.

Shannon McDaniel: Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: We're up to one more.

Male Voice: I don't as much have a question for you, Shannon, as much as I want to recognize you in front of my tribal council or my council members here. I want you all to know that in my opinion, the Choctaw Nation before Shannon took over the agriculture department was pretty stagnant. Since he's been in there, he is moving the Choctaw Nation's agriculture in the right direction. I appreciate that. I appreciate your effort. Keep on that. Thank you.

Shannon McDaniel: I've got some cards. I'll leave them with John. Is that okay? And it's got my e-mail address on it, the cellphone number. Get a hold of me if there's anything I can offer. Thank you all.

Mark Wadsworth: Next speaker will be from the Quapaw Native Ag Operation, Tom Hardcastle.

Tom Hardcastle: I just want to thank you for letting me come and speak. My name is Tom Hardcastle. I'm the agricultural manager for the Quapaw Tribe of Oklahoma. And I'm glad Shannon went first because maybe he'd answered a lot of your questions. I'm currently the manager over the beef and the buffalo program there. We've started the beef program and it's an Angus pure. It's a registered herd. I run it as a registered herd. I put EID tags on their ears that way its electronic ear tag and I can individually keep track of every animal on the place. We like that because we're starting from the pasture to plate program in all of our restaurants. That helps me maintain the quality of beef from the time that it's born, from the time that it's weaned, from the time that it's fed out, to the harvest. You can also go backwards on that. If I have a problem when it's harvested, I can go backwards to where it was weaned, to where it was born, to the mother, and we can take that problem out.

We also do a program where we ultrasound all of our beef, too, twice and we take pictures of the rib-eyes. And if that quality starts to go down, we can also look at that particular animal, where it came from, the genetics of his mother and everything like that. And if it's not performing up to our specifications, we can take that animal out and place another one in. I replaced our cattle with our heifers. We maintain

genetics with conjunction as per ranch. High, high quality beef.

And that's why we're maintaining such a high quality in our high end steak houses, in our Spring River buffets. We use all of our beef now. A 100 percent Quapaw beef in our restaurants. It's a wonderful product. A lot of the tribes are starting to come to us and asking us questions about what can we do to maybe get some of your beef or try to template what you're doing so we can look and see and maybe do the same thing because it's performing so well.

Also the buffalo end of it, I'm doing the same thing with the EID tags, because I want to know when that -- it tells us when that animal came in, where that animal came from. When we run it through and work that particular animal, I can tell you what vaccines it had, what the weight it was, the body score and what it is. Then it's gone and then we'd come back, and we DNA them all. Every animal on the buffalo side, we DNA. That way we can run a pure herd and a herd that has cattle DNA, and it'll tell us whether it was from like the Wichita Mountains or the Badlands. It specifies what area in the nation that's where it came from.

So that's helped us on another deal because we're starting to harvest buffalo. And right now were doing it for our Title 6 which is our elder program. It's about 150 meals a day of

lunches. We do a Meal on Wheels. It's about 80 meals per day. We're starting to put buffalo in our childcare and facilities, our learning centers. Just like you were talking about, they have to have beef for their minds to develop. Four hundred calories don't work. It will not work. But the whole thing is, we're putting the buffalo back into the people. That's where it should be. I mean, that's it. Our Creator wanted us to have that and then we're getting it back to our tribe.

Speaking on the 400 calories, my daughter has juvenile diabetes. She can survive on a 400 calorie-diet lunch. There's no way possible. Whoever came up with that, they have no idea what children really need. They burn over 2,000 calories a day on the average, a child does, just by playing and running around. So whoever was that was a vegetarian, a vegan, but they didn't live under my roof. I'd promise you. But we're just trying to get back to the basics.

I feel like we're flagship program on our beef end because a lot of the tribes have come to us and asking a lot of questions on what we're doing. It's really a -- and we're talking about the funding. It's an expensive deal to run a program like we're running. I mean it's not free. Everything, the man-hours, the system of running it like a registered herd, it's high end, I mean and especially with the buffalo. And that's what we're doing, it's maintaining the quality and it's

working out for us. It may not work for everybody else but it works for us. And apparently, we're doing something right because we've had a lot of people calling us, a lot of people. So in short, that's basically what we're doing.

Mark Wadsworth: Can I ask you a question on your animal ID and tagging. Is it more of do you have a tower system or do you run them through a shoot?

Tom Hardcastle: No, we run them through a shoot, and we have a scanner. That ear, you just scan it just like that and it will pull up that particular number. And that information, it will kick out how old that animal is, where it came from, everything we've done up to a certain point of that time, whether we worked it, and gave it a certain vaccine, a warmer, a weight. It'll tell us the whole history of that particular animal. In that way, you know by body composition if he is declining, we need to figure something out or something is wrong. I mean, it's a great, great deal. It really is.

Mark Wadsworth: You know, we've tried to work with that on our reservation. We have about 300,000 acres that we have. One of the biggest range units, 114,000 to a couple of thousand acres on our low end but we are really a mountain area. So when we were looking at trying to do this animal ID, you know trying to keep track of them and stuff, you need line of sight if you have a tower system, which they might be in a draw there.

You've never seen them for months. But I was thinking that with this new drone technology, maybe something like that will work here in the future.

Tom Hardcastle: We've tried a little bit of that drone and it kind of got away from them. And the buffalo really didn't like it because --

Male Voice: [Indiscernible].

Tom Hardcastle: No, for a drone. It cost them \$1,500, and they said we might do something different now. But it works for us because in the area that we have everything is easy and it's accessible. We can bring them in and work them. The facilities we have is state-of-the-art. I mean, I don't know if some of you have been up there and seen our facilities. It's an open book. We would love anybody to come up there and look at our facilities because it's, bar none, one of the best that you'll ever see. It really is from what we have. It's really nice. I would like people to come up and look at it.

Mark Wadsworth: Thank you. I appreciate it.

Leslie Wheelock: Mr. Chairman, it's Leslie.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes?

Leslie Wheelock: The 400-calorie issue isn't true. What I'd like to explain -- the only 400-calorie lunch recommendation I could find was part of this Paleo Diet which I'm not sure anybody is on right now. But the FNS lunch meal pattern

calories range from a minimum of 550 for K through 5, up through a maximum of 852 for grades 9 through 12. I'm happy to put this material into our record when we put the minutes out. Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: I think the other's concern was red meat.

Leslie Wheelock: The other concern, the red meat concern, I've found a letter from many senators but penned by Senator Thune. Every five years the US Department of Agriculture and HHS put together dietary guidelines. Those dietary guidelines have an organization behind them that makes the recommendation as far as what those guidelines should be, and that recommendation came out with a lack of red meat in the recommendation. I don't know if it was oversight or what, but there's no red meat in that recommendation. So the senators have written to both Secretary Vilsack and Secretary Burwell - Sylvia - in HHS in order to convince them that red meat be included in the dietary guidelines when they do finally come out.

Mark Wadsworth: Derrick Lente, did you have a comment?

Derrick Lente: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. It's Derrick Lente from the Sandia Pueblo. A follow-up to both the Choctaw and the Quapaw's presentation. I applaud both of the tribes for the efforts that they're making in terms of their cattle production. Back where I come from, all of the cattle

production is done in an individual basis so everything that is done in regards to cattle production is done per individual. And so I'm very ignorant in terms of how a tribe's cow production works. The revenue generator from a cow production, does that go straight back into regenerating a better quality of meat, better quality of bull, better quality of everything since it regenerates itself?

Okay, that's just something really nice to have especially the Choctaw's template or the idea of being able to produce quality bulls for their AI program, because for a producer like me, I have to go out and fend for my own self. That's not a bad thing, but at the same time if you're tribe has the availability to lend itself to producing quality bulls that you can use and then also not only just do that but also market under a certain umbrella of a quality of meat, that's more power to you and to your tribes and to your producers.

I think that you're taking cattle production to another level and I can appreciate that because for an individual like me, I'm doing everything that I think at least the Quapaw are doing in terms of how they try to develop their own beef. But I'm doing it in a much smaller scale because I just don't have the land capacity or the checkbook at this point to produce hundreds and a 200-head of just quality registered beef. So

more power to you guys and keep up the good work.

Male Voice: One thing. We are going to start a program where if you buy a genetic bull that we have or our partner - the people that we borrow bulls from - what's nice is if you only have a herd of 20 to 30 or 40, if you run that particular genetic of that bull with your herd, and then if you have Black Angus cow, go ahead and get it registered with Angus cows. We would buy back the calves and you know at a fair market price so that's an out. That's a deal too.

Derrick Lente: A follow up, Mr. Chairman, to that statement is that I actually do the same thing on my own ranch as well. I've sold my own bull and everybody that buys my bulls, I'll also buy back their offspring to better market my beef as well. But again on a much smaller scale. The idea is similar but again just applied to the tribes that are trying to do that for their own people.

Mark Wadsworth: Thank you, Derrick. Next speaker, from the Osage Nation's Ag Operation, the Assistant Chief, Raymond Redcorn.

Raymond Redcorn: I will move the mic over here where I can see my notes. Thank you for the invitation from Mr. Lowery to show up today. We appreciate it. I can tell you right now that if the Choctaw Nation, the Quapaw Nation are in a speeding car

and they're headed down I-40, the Osage Nation is trying to find the map and the keys and the credit card, especially the map. And I want to probably talk about that a lot today. So you're not going to hear about how great the Osage nation is. What you are going to hear about is what it feels like to onboard the process at the USDA. I'm going to talk about three things this morning. I want to talk about the Bird Creek Farms which is our agricultural effort. I want to talk about that onboarding process, and I want to talk to you about a technological innovation that I'm kind of surprised we don't hear more about.

So we'll start with Bird Creek Farms. The Osage Nation, as many of you know, has really been concentrating on oil for most of its modern existence. But we re-formed our government in 2006, and after the reformation of that government, we started paying attention to other things. And I was fortunate enough to be elected to the Osage Nation Congress in 2006 right after the reformation, and then was elected Assistant Chief just seven months ago. So I've seen the Council side - what gets passed for a council - and I'm experiencing the executive side. But what happened after we --

This is going to be hard for you to believe. I started asking, do we have a place we can grow vegetables? And our land guy said, "Well, yeah." I said, "Well, is it over by the Arkansas river or something?" "No. We own 70 acres of bottom

land right here next to Bahasca [phonetic]." I said, "You're kidding me. How long did we have that?" He said, "Since 1990." So this is how distracted we've been with the oil business, but we're trying to do something with that 70 acres. We are following the lead of the Kerr Foundation down in Poteau. We think they have really good ideas about sustainability and we're trying to implement some best practices. We are also taking a lot of input from the community in terms of what these operations are going to look out like and how we can cooperate with others.

I want to talk a little bit about the onboarding process with the USDA. There are several things that we really like about it. There is a wealth of information. And when I say a wealth of information, we're drinking from a fire hose in terms of trying to understand what we're hearing and get some clue about the breadth and width of what the USDA offers, and it's hard. It's good that there's a lot of information out there. But, man, it is all over the place if you're where we are.

There are very helpful attitudes. I also want to give a shout out to Dr. Crouch. She's been great in trying to help us. She's trying to help a lot of people. We've attended -- and there's been a lot of functions that we've gone to that have been sponsored that are really good. They're very informative

and we've learned a lot in a really a short period of time.  
That's all the good news.

Now I'm going to whine for a little while if you'll excuse me. What are all these acronyms? I know you folks have been in there for years and years. You know this language. But it might as well be French to us. If you don't have a dictionary of all of the acronyms for all of these programs and stuff, you need to write one. And you need to send it out to folks like us that are just getting involved with this. It's daunting. You spend half of the time saying what does that mean? I don't know what that is. What does that mean? There's an awful lot of that.

Second one and I say this with respect. Who are all of these people and what exactly do they do and why? Is there a primer somewhere for getting into the ag business if you're a Native American tribe and you don't have the 10 or 15 years of experience that -- I mean, is there? I haven't seen one. It looks pretty good. There are at least things or kind of the acronyms are in columns and you can go through there and find out what's going on with it. But honestly it is difficult to identify the roles of these people that play.

I want to say something very specific here. New participants need to understand the role of the USDA and the NCRS players and what that role looks like in the context of

each tribal nation's goals and objectives. All during this process, not one representative of the USDA or the NCRS has asked what our nation's goals and objectives are and what we're trying to accomplish. Maybe I just think differently. But if we had a questionnaire or something to fill out something about what are you trying to do, I really think it would be a lot easier for the USDA to help us. But instead it's really just a lot of information and a lot of offers to help that it really -- I sometimes get the impression there's a real reluctance to give advice because the USDA is going to help -- have to help own that result. If we knew what we were doing, we wouldn't be asking you for the help. This is not about attitude. There's a great attitude to help, but the whole onboarding thing could be a little more customized.

Regarding irrigation specifically, we got one little thing. This is kind of a synopsis of what's going on. I'll read from what I prepared here. We need the grant material. It appears we need to spend money and resources on an inefficient irrigation system and waste water for a couple of years in order to qualify for a grant to install an efficient system. If a waiver of the two-year requirement to irrigate really exists, and I've heard that it really exists somewhere in Washington, Bahasca did not get the memo. They just flat didn't. Not yet. We just keep waiting for these people up here to communicate

with these folks here. In the meantime, it's planting season so we're going to hook up the city water and spend money that I really had hoped we didn't need to spend.

I have some specific suggestions, and again, I'll say this is from a totally rookie standpoint. If there's reasons that these comments are unfounded, just forgive me and overlook what I have to say. Assign a coach to help tribes and individuals navigate your bureaucracy or at least be available as a reference to give directions on how to meet tribal goals and objectives. I want to give a big shoutout to this gentleman over here in the green cap. He's been our salvation as the lone rep. But I can tell you right now, try to call this guy, he's buried. He is absolutely buried. He can barely respond to the text because he has so many demands on his time. But he has done more to further our cause by simply saying, "No, here's what you need to do," or "No, just drag these pieces out and put them in front of you," because he understand what we're trying to accomplish.

After determining tribal goals and assess what resources and tribes and individuals do have, in order to make right size recommendations, a simple questionnaire about what we're trying to accomplish as a tribe would go a long way to having a very large bureaucracy understand what we're trying to accomplish. Here's a suggestion: A little equipment goes a long way. We've

heard a lot. Both the previous speakers talked about beef. Man, where I'm from, beef is king. We live in the best place in the United States, almost. If it rains all summer, here is where the big blue stem is, right here. It's actually I can't reach that high because I'm short. Hold on. Let me get my place back.

A little equipment goes a long way. Why would you want each individual tribe to get grants or spend their own resources to get a tractor and a plastic culture device and other things to grow specialty crops if you could buy two tractors and have two guys, and they could go in no bigger than these operations are, they could really take care of everybody in Oklahoma in a matter of two or three weeks. That would seem like a much better use of resources rather than each tribe have this equipment that they use for two weeks out of the year, and then it just sits there or if they used it for that long, if they have small ag operations where they're planning things.

Micah Anderson, I think some of you know who he is, runs that plastic culture. That's a really good example. OSU just got one guy and a tractor, and he goes and he was out at Otoe the other day, planted it up for them. But there's a lot of demands on his time, too.

Okay. That ends the whining session. I'm going to talk about one little piece of technology that I don't know if you

heard about. As you can tell, I have not spent my life growing crops or raising beef. I have, before my political career, spent my life in construction. And there's a very simple concept that's already been proven out at. It was actually proven out in the '90s and I really don't understand why it's not more widespread. And at the end of this little spiel about this I'm going to probably ask the USDA, is there some money to do something like this?

I say passive solar greenhouse and everybody's eyes glaze over because I said this to a guy who owns two green houses and he said everybody's greenhouse is solar. I said I understand that, but if you orient a greenhouse in a particular direction and you put thermal mass inside that greenhouse, and you insulate the north side where you'll never get any sun from in the winter time anyway, you have a structure that will heat itself. It will not freeze, and instead of talking about extending the growing summer in season, where we are all bake here under 107 degree heat, I'm trying to extend at this direction and this direction in spring, why not flip it over, start in September, grow crops in a greenhouse that won't freeze and grow all the way to May? Now you got nine months. No, it's not a cattle operation. But this is proven technology, and the reason I know that is because I built one for myself. I didn't think this up. There have been people in different places in

the United States doing this since the '90s. So my question is, is there a grant that we can get to build that and process it? I'll take my comments off mic. I hope I haven't gone on too long here. But I'll try to cram a lot of our experiences into a really short period of time. Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: I'm going to shoot another acronym, one of those things at you. But I think that is daunting for everybody who starts to realize how huge USDA is. At one time, its budget was second only to the Department of Defense. It's still quite large. I think the last five-year Farm Bill appropriated basically a little over a half a trillion dollars to be divvied out to various agencies within the USDA. The one I'm going to talk about is Rural Development, RD, USDA-RD. Under USDA-RD, they have a value-added grant and I believe that they would be more than willing to talk with you about value-added to a production greenhouse. I think probably if you're looking for the infrastructure, they would be the ones to be looking in that direction.

Chris Beyerhelm: Mr. Chairman? Mr. Chairman?

Mark Wadsworth: Yes.

Chris Beyerhelm: I'm going to ask a question, Chris Beyerhelm. Just a couple of comments, I'm with USDA by the way, so I appreciate your comments. I took no offense, I've heard of it before.

Raymond Redcorn: It's a feedback.

Chris Beyerhelm: Yes, very much so, but because we've heard these comments before, there actually are some things in place. So number one, I'm glad that you recognized Mr. Bond over here because IAC is one of the ways that we try to help facilitate this drinking from the fire hose. On the other is we have an effort called One USDA and we can help make these connections. If you want to have the FSA, Farm Service Agency, NRCS, and RD come out to your tribe and you can just sit down with whoever you want with your council and just say these are our needs. And then they can tell you what programs they have will help you. We've done that in a number of places. So I'm glad to help make those connections. It's not exactly like the question everybody gets. It's more of a face-to-face questionnaire.

Raymond Redcorn: Yes. I'm not trying to nitpick but the needs are what we don't know about. What we do know about is what we're trying to get. So sometimes, we're not sure. There may be things that we need that we don't know we need, but it's that kind of dialogue. I think you're talking about the place where a lot of dialogue occurs and maybe that can be drawn.

Chris Beyerhelm: Yeah. It's exactly what the tribe do and where we've done this before. Leslie you can speak to this more as the tribe say, "Here is what I want to get. I want to have a

tribal cattle herd." And then each organization will say, "Here's what we have to help you. Here's what we have to help you" and go from there. So I want to offer that up as one opportunity.

Raymond Redcorn: And who will help set that up?

Chris Beyerhelm: If you give me your card, your information, I can get it started, yeah.

Raymond Redcorn: Thank you.

Leslie Wheelock: Yeah. We can all do it. Mr. Chairman? Go ahead.

Mark Wadsworth: Go ahead, Jerry.

Jerry McPeak: Thank you. Thanks for being here. We do appreciate it. For those of you who are visiting from outside our state, when he says they have some of the best cattle country in the world, that is actually a very, very true statement, but very specialized at one time in the yearling cattle. We run the cattle as the extension for the Flint Hills that goes up into Kansas and the grass is a little stouter because of the ground, tremendous cattle country. As those of us who run cattle know that grass up that high is worthless but when you get it, you raise it down here. I think it's really good cattle country.

With your deal, we are going into a deal. You guys don't use too much improved pasture but you have some improved pasture

which means Bermuda grass or things like that. The Creeks and the Cherokees partnered with the Soil Conservation Service in our counties and provided that. We have no-till drills where they could go in and --

Raymond Redcorn: We have one.

Jerry McPeak: Okay. You guys actually own one?

Raymond Redcorn: No, the NCRS owns one and I went in the other day to try to figure out how it works because one of the things we come across for this is rotated vegetables.

Jerry McPeak: We're always hit [sounds like] with this, we partnered on the cost of some of those things so that they rent them out but your individual operators, not just your tribes, your individual operators also get it. If you have financed that, they get to rent them out at a reduced rate. I don't think you get preference all the time at a reduced rate. So we've had some pretty good partnerships. I have been in a situation where we have a need. They have a need. We put them together. We've done them on several very expensive piece of equipment.

Raymond Redcorn: Just a comment, our extension agent, because we are so heavily into cattle, is a little bit of a round peg in a square hole or we are because he's cattle, cattle, cattle, cattle, cattle, cattle, cattle. And a

few guys down the bottoms grow wheat and soybeans and marijuana, yeah. [Off topic comments]

We would benefit greatly from knowing easily where to go to find more people like Steven that know a lot about specialty crops. I'm not a prepper [sounds like]. But if you just watch the news and you see the water situation in California and you know that most of the nation's vegetables come from there, and you combine that with our experience - I could use a lot of superlatives - this is prevalent in a lot of Indian communities. But Lord Almighty, the prevalence of diabetes where we come from and the premature deaths that occur monthly in our communities from not having a good diet and using fat, sugar, and salt instead of basil and mint and other things, yeah. We're trying to go that other direction. We got all the meat we can stand. We're just trying to exercise more and eat better and this is part of that effort. Between those two needs, if we knew somebody else that could help us like Steven, that wasn't quite as buried [sounds like] as he is, it would be very helpful.

Mark Wadsworth: And speaking of Steven, he was just one that mentioned that there is a conservation innovation grant through NRCS that possibly would work within this scenario. But I think that what Chris is saying getting those three agencies with you and you presenting what your goals are and between

those three working with you, personally, I think that you'd probably have a pretty good chance of achieving what you want.

Raymond Redcorn: Very good, thank you for that. I appreciate it.

Leslie Wheelock: Mr. Chairman?

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, Leslie.

Leslie Wheelock: Leslie Wheelock, I'm the director of the Office of Tribal Relations at USDA. And try as hard as we can to get the word out, we are often referred to as the small but mighty Office of Tribal Relations by our own USDA personnel. I talk to our people all the time in USDA about how inefficient it is to try to get all of our material out on a website because people who are farming don't have time to look at a website. People, who are out there where there is no broadband connection, do not get a website. However, I don't know if you have found these two particular websites. I'm just going to put them out there. One of them is called Start2Farm. That's the number 2, Start number 2 Farm. If you just type that into a search engine, it comes up with a lot of information that could be useful.

The other one is New Farmers. Again, you just type New Farmers into your search engine. Both of those are hosted on the USDA Web portal. I don't know if either one of them is useful. The New Farmers is a pretty new production. The Office

of Tribal Relations tried to help with it. A lot of people tried to help with it. And again, we're trying to put all of the acronyms and the Washington D.C. speaking level out of the picture and create something that people on the ground can actually use. I would appreciate you and your team looking at those and letting us know whether either one of them is useful. Because it's hard to tell going out and around and talking to folks and having tribes come in and talk to us what's working and what's not. It's obvious that you're getting a whole lot of information and it's really hard to know. It's hard to navigate it, and we get that.

Raymond Redcorn: Let me say something very positive. It's apparent to me as a tribal leader that got this as a pet project going on, that we are going to succeed because of the resources and information that USDA is putting out there. That is not what I'm here to talk about. I'm simply trying to figure out how to make those connections --

Leslie Wheelock: Yeah.

Raymond Redcorn: -- and make them easily and timely.

Leslie Wheelock: That's fair.

Raymond Redcorn: So I don't want any of my comments to be misconstrued. I know. I can tell and I hear and I believe how helpful USDA wants to be. Sometimes it's just a communication issue.

Leslie Wheelock: And the other thing is the helpfulness. Having worked with the One USDA sessions, we have a lot. And I understand that you probably sat through a lot of presentations and PowerPoints and things like that and you stayed awake. One of the dynamics that I've been trying to get focused on is having the tribes come in with their bunch of paper sheets and put them on the wall and have our people walk around and identify what they can do. What things they can help with when they come in to a room like that, and then to pitch their agencies and their work to you, given what you want to do on your list on the wall.

It's a little bit of a different kind of presentation model that I think helps our tribes when we could pull it off. We've managed it a couple of times actually at NCAI conferences where we've got this huge number of USDA people there and a couple of our tribes in the room. They'll just sit down and say, "I need this. What about this? Where do I go to find this?" And when they come to Washington, they get the same thing. When we're out on the road, we try to help with those.

The other thing is that yesterday, Oklahoma was announced as a StrikeForce State. What that means for our farmers should be that these One USDA sessions come together a lot more frequently, a lot more often. You may get more interest from Washington than you ever wanted in your life. But it's a focus

that we hope will help to push our programs out to our farmers, ranchers, to our tribes better. If that's not working, I'll give you my card and you can let me know.

Raymond Redcorn: Thank you so much for your time. I know I went over my time. I'm sorry, but thank you so much for the feedback. I appreciate it.

Leslie Wheelock: Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: Thank you. I have also a couple of changes to the agenda. We'll have Zach Butler come up next and he'll have some people from the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribe he would like to introduce also and talk about. Then after that, we'll go in and do another presentation from the chairman of the Comanche Nation and also the chairman of the United Indian Nations of Oklahoma, Kansas, and Texas. Chairman Wallace Coffey will speak after that. Go ahead, Zach.

Zachary Butler: Thank you, Mr. Chairman for allowing me to speak with the council this morning. I know we already covered IAC and everything. But I wanted to introduce the people to some of the people that I work with. First of all, I work the Southern Plains region. I'm part of the Technical Assistance Network from IAC. As you well know, we are the ones that go out and work with the people, work with the tribes. I've been out here working. And one of the big things that we push and that

I've been really working with is working with our kids. We've been pushing it.

When I first started this job, you would go and mention loans. People were scared of that. They didn't want to do that. So a lot of my work in the beginning and still is, is working with NRCS because working with our people, they've never even been to that office. So we're having to start from the ground up. We're starting with the conservation planning, getting their goals, and then we're going to start working forward from that. And then start bringing in all these programs, just like I was mentioning with my friends here with the Cheyenne and Arapaho.

We're going to get that done and then we're going to start talking about CSP, EQIP. We've already been talking about that. We're going to start pushing those programs. A lot of our people here, as Jerry knows well in Oklahoma, some of our Indian people have never been in that office because of what the lady said the other day, "We're scared to go in there." They feel intimidated to go in there.

So what I do, what I have been doing is they're calling me up and say, "Can you go to the office with me and help me out?" "Yeah, sure, let's go." We'll go in there and sit and then we will work through the process. And then they start spreading the word. They start telling other people, it's not that bad.

We can do this. And they start spreading the word out there and they'll call you up, "Let's do this. Let's do that." So basically, that's what I've been working on here. It's been with NRCS.

I have recently now, ever since I've gotten my first youth loan with this boy, he's been spreading the word. And I've been getting a lot of calls for youth loans now. I got two successful ones here in the state. And now, I've got three or four that I'm working on right now to push these guys forward. I'm really excited about working with the kids. And I'm even working with my own kids. I've been working with 4-H groups. I'm trying to help them out. So we've been working on that.

And then most recently, I've been working with the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes. And I've worked with the other tribes too. But recently, I've been working with them. We're taking it, looking at some of their land what we're going to do to improve it. Looking at what their goals are, start pushing that forward, start moving forward with their operation.

So I just wanted to take just a little bit of time here to introduce myself again to the council because this is the first time I've got to address the council, know who I was. I introduced myself the other day but some of the people weren't here, talk about what I've been doing kind of the regional because I did speak with our program director, Zach Ducheneaux,

who couldn't be here. He said at this time, we didn't really have a national report for IAC but give a regional report, kind of what we're doing since we are here in Oklahoma. This is me and Steven's region. He covers the east side. I cover the west side of the state.

But I wanted to introduce the people that I've been working with in the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribe. We have the Economic Development director, Nathan Hart. Their farm operation falls under Economic Development. We also have James Black [phonetic] who's with Economic Development and Tommy Bear Track [phonetic] who's with Economic Development. And we have our farm manager, Randy Hawk. I've been working a lot with him and then one of his hands, Forest Fire.

They have buffalo. They run buffalo and cattle and they have some horses. We're taking a look at their lands and we're starting from the ground up. Like I said, conservation plan, grazing plans, figuring stocking rates, what they can run, look at their land. And then we're going to start looking at these other programs, start implementing that on their lands and start trying to improve it so they can build. What their goal is to make it sustainable. They want it to be sustainable. They want to build, to hit, to carry their selves so. Again, I just wanted to take just a brief time here to address you guys and

let you know what I've been doing and introduce the people I've been working with. Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: Thank you, Zach. We have a little time and on the agenda if some of the people you introduced would like to come up and say something to the council. We have time for it.

Male Voice: Greetings, council, it's a pleasure to be here today. We had a very exciting day yesterday because as you know there are other USDA officials in the state. We got to have a lot of the state directors come out to our facilities yesterday, spend some time in Cheyenne and Arapaho lands. Right out of a big busload, we had a cultural program for them. They got to take some of our dried buffalo meat home with them, those that wanted to. And then we took them out, saw our herd, drove out right in the middle of it. And they got to jump out of the bus and take some photo-ops and they had a great time. We were the last stop of the day for them. I'm not sure if we were ever going to get them off our property, but they eventually left.

A lot of us that are here today are under a year in this program. The program has been operating within the tribe for a while but as individuals in our capacities. I think I'm the newest one to come aboard. I've been there a little over four months. We're really starting to put forth the plans again as Zach mentioned how to make our program self-sufficient.

Size-wise, the tribe owns a little over 10,000 acres but 9,500 of that is in agricultural use. Approximately 40 percent of that is cropland. The other 60 percent is the grasslands and that's where our herds are. We primarily have three locations right now. The number of head that we have out there, not counting the babies that are being born, there are approximately 250 cattle that are out there. Beginning of the month, we had over 400 buffalo. That's been reduced some because we're sending some of that off to market. At the beginning of the month, we had about 50 head of horses, a little bit more than that. So that's where we are numbers-wise.

And again, it's good to be here because we're forming partners with a lot of these agencies and other tribes as well. I'm really glad that people are sharing. We're sharing our successes with people and looking at how to improve everything. And what I stress the big thing is, isn't just looking at improving like our pastures and our herd but improve our working facilities. We got the green light from our administration to reinvest a lot of our profits back into our facilities because it just presents a safer environment for our guys. We certainly don't want to lose any livestock. But we definitely don't want to lose any individuals out there that are working. And there's a big difference in working cattle and working buffalo. We got some mean head of buffalo out there, but on a converse side we

got some mean cattle out there too that have been worked in years. But thank you for the opportunity to share briefly today. And again, we look forward to a good working relationship with everybody.

Mark Wadsworth: Derrick Lente?

Derrick Lente: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and thank you for the comments and for all of the other comments from all of the tribes from Oklahoma. Going back to Chief Redcorn's discussion about how his tribe is just now starting in terms of farming and perhaps even ranching to a certain extent. I come from Sandia Pueblo, New Mexico and we're in the middle of the desert. And my experience in farming and ranching is that I grew up farming and ranching with my father. It was all as a hobby. As an adult now, I've tried to turn it into not just sustainable but tried to make it a for-profit operation as well. I was telling the folks earlier that I do it on a much smaller scale but it's an individual scale and I farm about 100 acres of alfalfa. And I run about 50 mama cows of a registered Santa Gertrudis herd.

And following all the same principles as you all do, I understand the struggles as a young farmer because I've lived the struggle of trying to buy equipment, the right equipment to make it as much as possible an efficient operation as I can. And it's not always easy. But my comment goes to the point of

the federal programs that are out there - the USDA programs, the micro loan programs for individuals that maybe your tribe, you want more than a micro loan. But for individuals on your tribe that are looking to have individual properties that they want to buy cattle, or they want to buy equipment. I've taken advantage of a micro loan program and I have to attest that it's one of the smoothest and easiest ways to get an operation capital if you're trying to start up. A youth loan as well, my daughter who is 13, who was here yesterday, took advantage of a youth loan as well. That program in itself is something that she's already reaping the benefits of that youth loan. And we just got that last year.

So I can attest to the federal programs that are out there that have helped at least my small family farm operation to help become a profitable operation because of the way we try to manage it. I know we have to start somewhere.

Going back to your discussion about should we buy a tractor, should we not buy a tractor, can we just borrow it and use it in a more efficient manner. Going back to something I learned from my father is that when I started farming, I asked him to borrow his tractor and he said no. He said, "You go out and buy your own tractor because as a farmer or as a rancher, you never want to borrow stuff. You always want to have your own things so that you can farm when you want to farm, how you

want to farm. You don't have to worry about anything else or anybody else trying to borrow it but just buy your own stuff." And that's why as hard as it might be, the struggles might be, the reality of having your own equipment I think as a young farmer, as a tribal farmer and rancher is an important factor if you want to do it for the long haul. And the intent here is to do it for the long haul. Thank you for the opportunity.

Mark Wadsworth: Jerry?

Jerry McPeak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As great a tendency as we have as Native Americans for horses, you are the first tribe I've heard to say that raises horses as part of their program. I was with three gentlemen last night on the panel and they spent 80 percent of their time talking about horses but none of us raise horses. How do you market them? What do you do with them? What's the purpose? Where are you headed with the horses?

Male Voice: When we came in, it really wasn't a defined plan for the horses. We're having to put that together right now but most of our herd - and this really goes back to the ways that we support our tribe culturally - is that a lot of these are giveaway horses that are given to individuals. They have no place for them. So they're ending up on our property. And as economic development from the ranch program, we're taking care of them for them. So it's really more of just a cultural way

that we're managing the herd. It does present some difficulties because they're out there on welfare. They're eating up a lot of resources but we've tried to implement a program now so that at least if people do that, we want to be able to re-coop a little bit of monetary support to help take care of them. It's been a struggle.

Jerry McPeak: You might want to go out to Blackfeet country and watch that deal. It's a wreck. Thank you.

Male Voice: Thanks.

Mark Wadsworth: We're on the next speaker, Chairman Wallace Coffey.

Jerry McPeak: May I, sir? This is Chairman Wallace Coffey, chairman of the Comanche Tribe as well as the chairman of the United Indian Nations of Oklahoma, Kansas, and Texas. Chairman Coffey is a leader not only in Oklahoma but nationally as far as being a thinker. If you want to talk about outside the box, this gentleman doesn't even know there's a box. So we appreciate it. I don't know what he's going to get about *The Lone Ranger* story. I know it's one of my shortcomings. My daughter almost killed me when I was invited to the preview and opening of. But he is a tremendous leader for the nations, all the Native American people in the United States.

Wallace Coffey: And I'm running for reelection. I'll be happy to take your contribution.

Male Voice: Chairman Wadsworth --

Jerry McPeak: And by golly, I'll give you one.

Wallace Coffey: I'm fortunate. I'm in my fifth term. And I've seen our tribe grow and progress over the years. We're somewhat hesitant to get in to a large operation.

I'll give you a little bit about our history. Where we're sitting now, where I'm standing, all the land south of this territory was opened up for settlement in 1889. The Comanche Nation at one time, we owned 64 million acres of land. Now we probably don't own any more than 12,000. But it's checkerboarded. Whenever the Dawes Act came aboard, my grandfather really wanted to work hard to establish a reservation, my great-grandfather, Ten Bears, because he knew the reservation status of some of the northern tribes. I admire you for those large land-based tribes. I like what you're doing with your operations. But down here, the Dawes Act separated us and gave us 160 acres of land.

At that time, you can make a living off of 160 acres of land, but now it's not possible. It's not possible unless you have adjacent tracks of land for your grazing operation, adjacent parcels of land for your farming operation. So we're somewhat limited. And we stay that way because of the drought that we're facing right now. Southwest Oklahoma, North Texas is in a severe drought. And I'm worried because we might end up

being a dust bowl all over again if we don't take any conservation measures into our consideration.

And I have seen the cattle operation from our non-Indian farmers just literally go away overnight whereas the cattle industry now is in Kansas and Nebraska. We have cattle. We have horses. We have buffalo. The best operation we've got going for us now is a buck and bull operation. And I'm hoping that before too long, we'll have some of our bulls into PBR. They're getting there. They're getting close. And we've got some juvenile bulls that will tear you up, I guarantee you. But the whole situation is we're small. We're independent farmers and ranchers.

I've always wanted to establish a Comanche Nation land and cattle company. And I finally identified 320 acres that tribal members own that are adjacent to one another. That's going to still be a small operation compared to the large land-based tribes. So because of the dilemma that we're faced with, when government gave us 160 acres of land, we're checkerboarded here, checkerboarded there, checkerboarded here. And there was the reason for that. They didn't want to have the Comanche Nation to have an uprising like they did in Wounded Knee or Little Big Horn.

So the whole situation was government used a ploy to separate us. But it also separated families from one another

and took away some of the most talented people with regard to farming and grazing operation and horse breeding because the Comanche Nation were well-known for our horse breeding.

But today, we're looking at it in a different circumstance. One of the best operations coming around the corner will be the end of April when we'll have our Comanche Nation Rodeo in Grandfield. It's a part of INFR. Last year, we had over 400 cowboys and cowgirls come to be with us for this event. This year, we'll have close to 600 cowboys and cowgirls who will participate in this INFR activity. It's a tour rodeo. We were voted the second most popular place last year among the INFR circuit, so it makes us feel good that the cowboys are going to come back once again.

We have a buffalo operation. It's small. But out of that operation, two of my granddaughters now, both of them went to culinary school and they opened up a restaurant in the mall in downtown Lawton. It's called The White Buffalo. It's a brew house and restaurant. And it's very successful because the people call, "Do you have buffalo steaks on the menu?" "Yes, we do." And one of my granddaughters cuts the choice meat herself. So it's very, very popular. And we're looking at expanding that operation to Cache, Oklahoma because I want to do a Star House project with Quanah Parker's Star House. So our operations are little, somewhat limited.

But last year, we had problems with the drought and I had to call my friend up in Kansas in Kickapoo, "Can you bring me a load of hay?" because he's got a good hay operation in Kickapoo in Kansas. They brought a truckload of hay, helped sustain my bull operation. And in the meantime, we're still wondering where's the water? And that's the problem that we're faced with. Yesterday, I talked to two of my farmers. One said he has five ponds. Three of them are dried up. The other farmer said he had three ponds and the water level is going down, but he is going to have to truck in water. That's the dilemma we have now. Although we've got a little bit of rain over the past few days, it's not enough to bring the pond levels or the lake levels back up. So we're in a serious dilemma.

I want to say thank you because one of the strongest supporters of agriculture comes from this state, Representative Frank Lucas. You know that he is a champion for agricultural purposes for all across the United States. When I get to Washington, I make a conscious effort to go and see him and praise him a little bit for what he's done on behalf of everybody. So today, it's good to see you, Jerry. And Chairman Wadsworth, I want to thank you for coming to the State of Oklahoma and let this not be the last time. Come to see our operation on a day-to-day basis. And I'm sure you'll get a lot

of feedback and some good old boys would just like to meet you.  
Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: I'd like to also say that our tribes put on the Comanche-Shoshone reunions annually and we go across the different parts. We all speak basically the same dialect and it's really, yeah. Thank you.

Jerry McPeak: Mr. Chairman, one interesting thing, I talked about outside the box. Chairman Coffey, where did you go to college?

Wallace Coffey: Harvard.

Jerry McPeak: Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: Thank you. That brings Kathryn. Kathryn's been very patient with us and gets to do her presentation. Kathryn, if you'd like to for the audience, given your capacity and your experience.

Kathryn Isom-Clause: Sure. Thank you for having me here. I'm not really a council member. I'm here at the council's invitation, so I always appreciate the opportunity. My name is Kathryn Isom-Clause. I'm a counselor to the assistant secretary for Indian Affairs at the Department of Interior, so BIA. That's what I'm here for. For my report, I will just kind of go through the list that we had on the council's recommendations if that works. I have a little bit more to add from what's in your

packets, but of course, if there are any questions, feel free or if you have new recommendations.

So one of the main things we were talking about a lot in this meeting too is the issue of BIA and USDA duplicating work by not accepting each other's appraisals and how we've been moving forward with that. As you all know the 2014 Farm Bill did authorize them to accept each other's appraisals, and there's been quite a lot of work being done even since our last meeting on that. If folks want to have the actual language that they've been working on but I don't want to read that out here because it's little bit long. But I can make that available to you. So the FSA's head appraiser and our director of the Office of Appraisal Services have worked on some language that FSA did in fact add to their manual already. So it's already been incorporated. And now, it's just the BIA is working to adopt similar language.

There are a few issues I guess that they're still kind of working through. For example, BIA when they do an appraisal, they don't include improvements on the land because that's considered personal property, not trust property. So they just have to make sure the appraisal do in fact align so that works for the lending institution. So it's basically about that. It's moved forward quite a bit since the last time we talked

about it. But if you have any more specific questions, I know our director was happy to follow up with folks too.

So, moving along to the request that trust lands should satisfy the requirements for a base property for a Forest Service grazing permit. We're still trying to figure out how BIA can be helpful on this because it is actually a Forest Service regulation. I think BIA, we do agree that they should count but it's just kind of working with the appropriate role of Forest Service. So I just talked to Mike Black again before I left on that and just how we can move forward on that. So I think keep having discussions especially when John's over there at Forest Service too, he would be a good contact. So we're continuing to work on that one I guess.

And so number three, BIA and USDA needing to coordinate better and educate each other on their programs. I think it was great that we were able to get the BIA regional director out here and the superintendent out here. I think this council has been a forum to get us talking together more. And then John and I have been talking about potentially setting up some meetings coming up in New Mexico, Arizona, and Oklahoma and just to have at the regional level, the folks educate each other in what they're doing. They're still in the process of that I think.

And of course, you have on there, John's update that USDA and DOI did host an onsite application and interview process for

Pathways employment opportunities at AIHEC, the American Indian Higher Education Consortium Student Conference, get away from all those acronyms, sorry. So I think this is moving forward. I think if there's any other specific trainings that folks would like to see incorporated for USDA from BIA, I'm happy to ask them for that. I know BIA has offered to do HEARTH Act training, which I think will really be useful. That's been coming up a lot. So I think everyone's ready and willing to do that, so it's just a matter of actually setting a date for that.

Same as number four, I think Sarah had brought up if DOI has any programs to support tribal courts, business law and tribal UCC and related codes like that. Again, I think BIA's ready to do that. They have done trainings so if that's something we want to move forward with, we just need some direction on when and how we want to set that up. We're ready to do that.

Burned area emergency response, that's also a council recommendation that we're trying to use [sounds like]. I'll just kind of briefly -- and John and I are both been talking to all the same people on this I think too. So we both found out that this MOU is really close to completion right now. They're actually finalizing the technical review before just kind of final internal clearance in the agencies. So we're getting really close on the BAER MOU.

And then finally the BIA liaison, I'm here. We don't have the MOU yet but again we're going to work on that or start to work on that as we move forward. But in the meantime, I'm not going anywhere. I'll be here. So right now we're talking about after this current administration, we're going to keep that relationship up. I think we know that's maybe not the original priority but we're happy to do that too. So that's all my updates. Do you have questions or other priorities?

Mark Wadsworth: Gilbert?

Gilbert Harrison: Thank you very much, Kathryn. I noticed the report here, a couple of things bother me. I'm being very specific on this issue because it was raised on Navajo, okay, Navajo reservation. And it bothers a lot of other tribes in the southwest, the space property. And I think it's been brought up at a CNA [phonetic], at a council session when we had it in Vegas, and it's been brought up on the paper. So the Forest Service has made an interpretation that's counter to what we're saying needs to happen. Now, we're saying in vague language here that BIA documentation is not too clear.

What I'm really asking for is what is not clear and what needs to happen particularly on trust property like in the southwest. How can we get our foot in the door? That's what we're looking for. Very key specific points because this is to say, well, the Forestry Services makes their interpretation.

Fine, they've done that. Now we're saying, BIA, how can you help us in terms of handling our trust lands so that our base property that we have on the trust lands will fulfill the Forestry Service needs? I think that's one area that I'm not ready to give up with this kind of a general statement.

I don't know what else needs to happen so we get some clarification, let's say, on trust lands. What needs to happen is what I'm asking for. Because if there needs to be some changes or some recommendations, we can take it to our tribes, they can request the Bureau of Indian Affairs of the Department of Interior to make some changes so that we can have equal access to Forest Service lands. That's what we're really after on this area. Thank you very much.

Mark Wadsworth: Thank you, Gilbert. I was talking with my superintendent just last week and they have what you guys have as a BIA superintendent boot camp in which you send your superintendents to approximately a week training exercise. My recommendation would be that they open the door for USDA to do presentations at that time to those superintendents to educate them and start that working camaraderie. Go ahead, Leslie.

Leslie Wheelock: Mr. Chairman, thank you for that, that's a great recommendation. In addition, I wanted to give you a little bit more information on one of the things that Kathryn mentioned which was the joint hiring effort. USDA internally

and together with the Office of Personnel Management in Washington, D.C. has begun travelling around the country to find people to fill our jobs. We have 98,000 people in USDA and 90,000 of those people are outside of Washington, D.C. spread across the United States. We have had hiring difficulties getting our youth, our recent graduates, our recent federal program folks into USDA simply because of the way that the hiring mechanism works or could work better.

What we have been starting to do is identify jobs that are available. We post those jobs about five days prior to some of these major conferences around the country. And then we have on the spot resume collection, on the spot interviews, and on the spot hiring. The most recent of those sessions has been at the American Indian Higher Education Consortium meeting/conference for their youth in Albuquerque. We are trying to focus on the next. They've identified a couple of other conferences where we can look at graduate students and pool those graduate students into our science and technology programs, as well as engineering.

We've also began working with the tribal colleges and universities to ensure that their curricula matches up with the requirements for soil conservationists, for example. Jobs that have specific requirements in them that the schools were not meeting, the schools that have those programs were not meeting

it. So their kids were graduating without having the ability to walk into a USDA job in their area of specialization. So we're working with our folks to try to mesh those curriculums better. We'll keep updating you on these processes. I don't have an account from the last job, but between the USDA and the BIA, we took 108 jobs out to --

Male Voice: One hundred and seven - 87 of them went to USDA and 20 of them went to the BIA.

Leslie Wheelock: A hundred and seven jobs - you're not on the microphone - 87 USDA and 20 BIA out to Albuquerque, and hope to have some information following up on what happened with those jobs and that hiring situation in the future. Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, Gilbert.

Gilbert Harrison: Thank you, Mark. This is Gilbert. All those vacancies, since I'm not making a dime farming and ranching, can I apply?

Leslie Wheelock: In answer to that, these are Pathways jobs so up to two years out of college. Gilbert, go back to college. Come on back and we'll see what we could do.

Gilbert Harrison: Anyway, thank you very much. I know the BIA, but the USDA, are you following that Indian preference in the hiring process? Thank you very much.

Leslie Wheelock: Thank you, Gilbert. This is Leslie. The USDA doesn't have hiring preference for tribal folks. That's a

statutory preference that's given to the Department of Interior as well as the HHS. We don't have the ability to institute a native hiring preference in the USDA.

Gilbert Harrison: What needs to happen to institute something like that? Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: One last and I'm going to jump back to the appraisal process too. There is currently the Indian Land Buy-Back Program in which I know that DOI and BIA is starving for appraisers because of the huge process that that is going to undertake. Maybe you ought to open the door to invite some USDA people maybe as a cross-section working together to assist with that. In that way, maybe also submit added education crossover.

Leslie Wheelock: We can look into that. This is Leslie again. We had been contacted early on in the process to provide some of our appraisals to cross over to the BIA folks who are out there working. I think that's still going on. We have an MOU in place that's allowing that transfer of information. I think we can probably back up and make sure that that information transfer is still in place. Thank you.

Gilbert Harrison: One other question I have. Yesterday and some of the other meetings, there's this issue of communication that keeps coming up particularly like in Navajo and some of these other reservations in terms of filling out forms and applying for certain benefits. I guess what I'm

saying is how can we improve that scenario so that it makes it easier for Native Americans with whatever tribe they're from to get benefits? That's a general question I have because right now we have a communication problem.

I think the other day, some lady here stood up and said, Native Americans are afraid because of the bureaucratic paperwork. One of the things that we're tasked with is to remove some of these barriers. I guess the question is how do we attack that one area and put that on the table? Thank you very much.

Mark Wadsworth: Thank you. I know some of us have to get checked out here at 1:00. To start at 1:30 again, can we do that promptly because I know that some people would be leaving? We'll just jump in to the working session at that time. Okay. We'll see you at 1:30.

Let's get as much done as we can. We might not have as much as we have scheduled here. Okay. I think at this time I'll just let John get his stuff out of the way that we need to do. Go ahead, John.

[Break 02:39:29 - 02:40:05]

John Lowery: Mr. Chairman, so we have set aside this time from now until the time you guys adjourn for a working session. A part of that working session is to give you all an opportunity to discuss the overall meeting that has taken place over the

past two-and-a-half days. To discuss possible recommendations, set subcommittee meeting dates for the next two months and also look at upcoming council meeting dates for the remainder of the calendar year, and anything else that you guys as a council decides to do. How would you like to move forward, any of you?

Sarah Vogel: I think with the subcommittee meetings, the best thing might be to request that the chair of each committee get in touch with the members and work out a mutually agreeable date within the next, say, three weeks, and then start work then. But if we try to sit down today and at least our subcommittee has lots of outside members, so we'd want to get in touch with them. I don't think we can pick a date but I think you could set a deadline for the chair to get in touch with their committee members and set-up a date, and then report back to you within three weeks or something of the date that the committees will start to meet. If that sounds good then we could move in to the resolution phase.

Mark Wadsworth: Looking at the calendar, which is on section 10, I guess we could put a notification being sent out of meeting dates planned for each one by April 20th. That's a Monday. And also some reminder, anybody is invited to participate in any of the committees that they so choose. Yes, Derrick.

Derrick Lente: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is simply a reflection of our past meeting for this go-around. I just want to thank the Oklahoma delegation for truly coming out in numbers, the tribes, the programs. Thank you to Mr. McPeak and his group, and his boys' group for coming out in numbers. I think that truly shows how dedicated the folks here in Oklahoma are to the ag and to all that we try to promote in our own communities.

I tell you what, talking to the FFA folks yesterday. I could have sat there all day long and rather listen to them. No offense to BIA, but I'd rather listen to them and what they do than the BIA and what they're trying to do. Because they're actually doing it on the ground, it reflects to what we do in our communities. We're the people that are in the trenches, that are in the dirt trying to make things happen. We hope when we come to these meetings and they tend to try to bring you closer to where we're at and what we're about. I'm thankful, don't get me wrong. I'm thankful to the USDA and the BIA, to all the folks that make these meetings happen, just to listen to us, but to also facilitate our discussions.

And again, I just want to thank the Oklahoma folks and there is definitely an Oklahoma flavor to this meeting and to this session completely. I guess I know that our time together is probably short-lived. I don't know how many more meetings

we're going to be able to have as a group. But if we could do this in other states that would be fantastic. I bet you, if you went to New Mexico, I'd coordinate the same thing. Maybe not to the same glamour and extent that Mr. McPeak can provide. But the fact --

Jerry McPeak: [Indiscernible]

Derrick Lente: You're glamorous. I give you that much. But I invite everyone to New Mexico to maybe perhaps do the same thing in New Mexico. Thank you.

Porter Holder: Just to kind of echo what Derrick said there. If we can have some youth in our meetings, it doesn't have to be the extent of yesterday. I don't know about you all but I had a good time yesterday sitting around with the kids. To me, that's the one we need to be targeting anyway to help to bring them along. I'm glad you all enjoyed the Oklahoma flavor right down to the weather. I hope we don't have that luck when we go to other states.

I don't want to think I want to make a recommendation toward it, but I think some of the council members should think about let's have some youth in. I mean if we can at our meetings, I don't know. I know D.C. it would probably be hard to get them in, but when we go out into the council member's state, if we could find them, the local ag chapter or someone to

bring in kids. I had a good time. It ran until 6:00 and hell, we're all crying. It was fun. I just want to put that over.

Mark Wadsworth: Gilbert Harrison.

Gilbert Harrison: I'm Gilbert from Navajo Nation. As far as what I thought about the meeting here, I like the change of scenery here. It does bring some new blood into our meetings. But also I think we have a lot of issues that we should be addressing. I think if we're going to have more reports like we did yesterday. It's nice to hear what people are doing, but there are some key issues that we really need to work on. I think we need to move them along so we could have a recommendation to the secretary that are meaningful. I think we have to sort of find a medium ground for that. I would like to see some of that happen.

The other thing I would also like to see happen at these meetings is that we get some feedback on the status of things that we have been told about. Are they worthy of our consideration? Or is it that somebody just airs it out and that's it? Because there are many things that are brought before us, some take action, but what have we done. I think there needs to be a little more positive feedback aspect of our meetings. I think I'd like to see something like that.

Besides, we're already into year one of our two-year appointment. So we're just going to have enough for two more

meetings, and then we're going to be out the door again.

Hopefully, we can reapply or whatever. So that means we got to sort of settle down and say, what are we going to do? Those are some of my points as far as our meetings go. Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: Angela Peter.

Angela Peter: Yes, I'm Angela Peter from Alaska. I think this is a really good meeting. Like Porter said, I had tears in my eyes as well. It was really, really encouraging to see the youth so involved. I'm looking forward to trying to identify ways that I can get the youth involved in Alaska. As far as coming around to different states, I would love it if you guys would come to Alaska because I'm sure I could give you guys an adventure.

The other thing is I love the fact that we focused on one agency such as the Rural Development. Because although I can read it kind of on paper, it was good too that you were there actually telling us in person. I don't know if you understand that but yeah, if we could have sort of focus groups of the agency that would be great. Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: I think one of the things that we had actually kind of made a recommendation in the past was in that's what we're getting to too. I would like definite answers. Is the secretary or is the USDA going to make this a permanent committee, or is this something --? I know Sarah is a part of

the court decree, that group. I want this to go past that court judgment. That's my concern at this time.

Sarah Vogel: I'm sketching out two resolutions for consideration to be forwarded to the secretary. One would be that the council recommends that there should be a Council for Native American Farmers and Ranchers that would continue after the six-year supervision period of the court has expired. That it should be made permanent or more long standing. We can hash out the language. But I have to leave at 2:45 so I would really like to introduce that. Well, maybe, could that be a motion? Are you ready to move in?

Mark Wadsworth: I believe everybody is in agreement. We can do that.

Sarah Vogel: Okay, let me back up. I don't know that I am the right person to make this motion, but I've heard Gilbert say it and I've heard Mark say it, that the council should be continued after the mandated period of the Keepseagle settlement agreement has expired.

Jerry McPeak: [Indiscernible]

Sarah Vogel: I don't know that I am the right one to make it, because I'm a counsel for the class.

Porter Holder: The plaintiffs.

Jerry McPeak: You remember the [indiscernible]

Sarah Vogel: Yeah, I am. Okay. I'm making that motion.

Tawney Brunsch: I'll make a motion that Sarah continues or that we create a resolution to establish the length of the council to be longer than what it is.

Jerry McPeak: We got to take it to 15 years.

Tawney Brunsch: As far as up to 15 years?

Sarah Vogel: Of indefinite duration.

Tawney Brunsch: Of indefinite duration.

Mark Wadsworth: It's been moved and seconded by the council to present a resolution to the secretary of Agriculture to make the Council for Native American Farming and Ranching a permanent and indefinite advisory committee to the secretary, any further discussion? Yes, Gilbert.

Gilbert Harrison: Mark, before we were talking about this issue, I think that's a very good resolution. Because the amount of time that it takes for us to really come to a key point and make a recommendation, the terms are very short. I would like to see an ongoing because the problems we face is going to take a long time to get them cleaned up. I think that motion is appropriate. Thank you.

Porter Holder: I agree with you, Gilbert. Porter Holder. I feel like from time to time, we're really getting ahead and think we're doing something. And then there's a whole another set of problems that come in. To me, we haven't even really started this deal. We're at the tip of it. All of these

acronyms everybody's kind of starting to understand, but I see so much work out there and so much lack of communication between the tribes and the USDA. Now whether that's tribal members that are too scared to come in for what? I don't know. But I feel like we got so much work to do. The short term that this is, we're never going to get it done. Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: Leslie Wheelock.

Leslie Wheelock: Mr. Chairman, one of the additional items that you might want to consider as part of this resolution is the funding of the council. Our office is required to essentially go out with hat in hand to fund every single one of these meetings. Most of that work is being done by John. There are other councils and committees that meet. I don't know where their funding comes from in the USDA. But I think that this council somehow needs to be put into that mold as that kind of a council.

I don't know what that changes in terms of the council, because they're all out there. They're all elected. We push out the terms for all of those other advisory councils every single time they come out. So I don't know that there's a difference, but I know that there's a different pot of money. So I think that part of the recommendation ought to be for the Office of Tribal Relations to see what needs to be done to this

council in order to make it funded better by the department.

Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: Would anybody like to make an amendment to the current motion to include the funding associated with running --

Male Voice: Oh, you have. Can you redo a motion back?

Sarah Vogel: I would amend a motion with Tawny's motion to provide that the existence of the council and funding for the council be made permanent.

Mark Wadsworth: Is there a second?

Derrick Lente: I second that.

Mark Wadsworth: Then moved and seconded. Any further discussion? Call to question. All of those in favor, say aye.

Participants: Aye.

Mark Wadsworth: Any opposed? The motion carries on the amendment.

Gilbert Harrison: Mark.

Mark Wadsworth: Any further discussion on the resolution? Sure, Gilbert.

Gilbert Harrison: Mark, we just acted on one resolution to make the council permanent. But I think I'd like to go ahead and make a motion to address the budget issue. We request the secretary to make sure that funding is made available for the council to carry out its duties for the term of the life of the

council. I think that needs to be put down as a resolution also.

Sarah Vogel: I think that's what we just did and now we need to make a vote on the major motion.

Mark Wadsworth: Are you ready, Jerry? Jerry McPeak.

Jerry McPeak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Along with that if we're not making it too complicated, my experience at the state capital is that these two-year terms are worthless. We just get cranked up and get an idea, and everyone's always running all the time. Just like us, the reason why a lot of us are doing better now, because we got some idea now about what happened. I'd like to suggest that those terms -- I don't care what the first one or the second one. I'll be making four-year terms. If I'm wrong, I want you guys to say it. That's just how I feel and I can certainly be wrong. But the four years will give you time to get your feet on the ground and follow thoughts up, in my opinion.

Sarah Vogel: Let me ask John and Leslie. Was the two-year term a requirement of the Federal Advisory Commission [sic] Act?

John Lowery: Yes, ma'am. The terms are two years with the person being able to serve up to six years, three terms.

Jerry McPeak: Let's start to work on the four-year terms.

Sarah Vogel: No. Two. Just two years.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, Jerry.

Jerry McPeak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Continued discussion on that, the recommendation we're making already with this are already not what the agreement said. Why does it hurt to add something else that the agreement didn't say? Do you see what I'm saying?

Sarah Vogel: It just wasn't in the settlement agreement. The two-year term is a requirement of federal law, the Federal Advisory Commission Act.

Jerry McPeak: You mean to tell me every committee only does it two years at a time? That's not right.

Sarah Vogel: Well, the terms have to be renewed every two years.

Jerry McPeak: Really?

Sarah Vogel: Yes.

Gilbert Harrison: Excuse me, Mark. I think I've heard this before. The advisory committee established by the government has two-year term limits. But I think this committee here was arranged through an agreement, a settlement, through a settlement. It was not part of a law to say the USDA shall have an advisory. Basically, it was a settlement and therefore, it should have certain things. But the term of the council members and all of that, to me, should be not strictly a government requirement because it was not a government requirement. It was a legal agreement to say we're going to have a council to do

this. I think that we may want to do it, look at it from a different angle. Thank you.

Sarah Vogel: This is Sarah again. The terms of the settlement agreement that set up the requirements that there be a council also stated that the council would be operated pursuant to the Federal Advisory Commission Act. That was part of the negotiation with the USDA because as a government agency, the operation of committees is governed by the separate federal law. So that was woven in. That's just the way it is. But I think it can work. There are many, many federal advisory committees that work just well. I think all of us who had regularly attended and were interested in it, were reappointed. So I don't foresee reappointment or continuity becoming an issue if it were continued.

Our concern is that the settlement agreement had a six-year term from the date of the settlement agreement, which means that there is no mandatory court ordered Council for Native American Farming and Ranching after October 2016. I think, from my perspective, as also being a council member, is that it has been extremely invaluable. I think the department's goal is they don't want to be sued again. They want to be doing the right thing. They want this feedback. They want to have this dialogue. They want to make it all work better. And this council is a very valuable tool to see that that is done.

So I think there should be support from the department to continue the work of this council to make its programs better and more accessible for Native Americans, not just now and in that six-year period, but for years to come. We can't do a four-year term, but you could be on up to six years and then there'll be a rotation. I call for the question.

Mark Wadsworth: All right, call for the question. For the original resolution to make the Council for Native American Farming and Ranching a permanent advisory committee to the secretary of Agriculture. All those in favor, say aye.

Participants: Aye.

Mark Wadsworth: Any opposed? The motion carries. Yes, Sarah.

Sarah Vogel: I'll try to be brief. I have a second motion. Go ahead.

Derrick Lente: No, I'm not trying to read your motion. I was going to ask you if it's still in the same subject as this one.

Sarah Vogel: Different.

Derrick Lente: I had a clarifying question on that, if I may?

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, Derrick.

Derrick Lente: On the six-year term, as I think, well, I guess Tawny and I are the newest members of this committee,

right? So then, the rest of you, how many more years do most of you have left?

Jerry McPeak: I thought I've been on here for four years. I guess, I'm fine [indiscernible].

Derrick Lente: So you've been on four. So you have --

Sarah Vogel: No, three.

Derrick Lente: You have three years left.

Sarah Vogel: And you have six.

Mark Wadsworth: You got five.

Sarah Vogel: Five.

Derrick Lente: I have five, yeah. So you'll have three years left, and then do you have to turn it over to somebody else?

Sarah Vogel: Rotation is good.

Derrick Lente: Yeah, I know it is. It is. I agree.

Gilbert Harrison: Mark.

Mark Wadsworth: Sarah is still recognized.

Gilbert Harrison: This is Gilbert.

Mark Wadsworth: Gilbert.

Gilbert Harrison: The motion that was just made and we voted on was to extend the life of the council. Now what I wanted to do was to also include sufficient funds for us to do our job.

Sarah Vogel: We did that.

Gilbert Harrison: Is that part of it?

Derrick Lente: Yeah.

Gilbert Harrison: I didn't hear it that's why I was saying. Is that part of it? If not, we should make it part of it.

Sarah Vogel: We had. Yeah.

Mark Wadsworth: It's been passed, Gilbert. That was the first amendment to the motion.

Gilbert Harrison: All right. Thank you very much.

Jerry McPeak: [Indiscernible]

Gilbert Harrison: The other comment I have concerns me. I've expressed this a couple of times that the membership, for some reason or another, some people are assigned and are nominated and are picked to be on the council, but it seems like this is a if-I-have-time type of attitude. I think the chore we've been given is important enough that we should make a commitment and if we don't, I think somehow either the chair or somebody needs to remind them that there needs to be a commitment.

Angela comes all the way from Alaska to attend all the meetings. Others make sure we're at the meeting. Like Jerry, he's got a legislation in session but he's taking time off of that. It sort of bothers me when people don't show up. Now if you have a surgery like Mary Thompson, yes, it's excusable. But

otherwise, somehow I think we as a council should encourage our members to make it a priority. Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: I believe we had this discussion before. It's actually a part of the by-laws, changing the by-laws to read if you missed two consecutive or whatever we decide is the stipulation, then you forfeit your position as a representative. Is anyone prepared to address that specific section within the by-laws right now? Or can we say it general --

Jerry McPeak: John, [indiscernible] can we get it in there?

John Lowery: I cannot recall.

Mark Wadsworth: We did not vote on it.

Sarah Vogel: This is Sarah. I would suggest that the chair and the vice-chair develop a policy for presentation to us either via email or to be adopted at our next meeting.

Jerry McPeak: I like to motion that today, the next meeting [indiscernible].

Mark Wadsworth: I agree too.

Sarah Vogel: All right. I don't have that motion.

John Lowery: Mr. Chairman, there is something in the by-laws that addresses that. I just don't have it off the top of my head. As of right now, I don't think anybody has missed two in a row. Now, next meeting could be --

Jerry McPeak: The guy from Nebraska didn't come.

John Lowery: The guy from Nebraska is no longer on the council. I'm just saying, this is only his first meeting that he's missed. But there is something in the by-laws.

Jerry McPeak: Along that discussion, he missed one. He missed 1.8 meetings and he's from Oklahoma. But you're either in or you're ain't.

Mark Wadsworth: Go ahead, Ed.

Edward Soza: I haven't seen these by-laws or gone through them. But I was thinking, two consecutive meetings would work. The only thing the council should take into consideration that sometimes you have -- I would consider it an excused absence for your bereavement, your wedding anniversary. I'm kidding.

Mark Wadsworth: That's not an excuse.

Edward Soza: That's an excuse to get here. No, I'm kidding. But I think something should be in there. On my tribe when we have a death on the reservation of a tribal member, even if we called a regular quarterly or general council meeting, it was a general council - the entire tribe - it's postponed. We don't even have regular council meetings. All of the committees on the reservation do not meet during that period. Usually, it's like three days. It's something we got to keep in mind for all the tribes throughout the United States, for all of us I mean.

Angela Peter: Mark.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, Angela.

Angela Peter: Dealing with by-laws, I have done this quite a bit on absences on councils. Maybe one of the good ways to do this would either be that everybody is under the understanding that they need to contact the chair or Mark before if they're going to miss. If not, then it's unexcused.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, Sarah.

Sarah Vogel: Sorry. I looked at the by-laws. This is what the by-laws say to that point. If a council member is unable to fulfill their duties, then the chair and the DFO - it should be Mark and John - will follow USDA procedures for the nomination of a replacement member. That's all.

Jerry McPeak: Mr. Chairman.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes.

Jerry McPeak: That is vague. You could fly a fleet of helicopters through it. That gives you nothing, no way to handle that because you have nothing to stand on. I didn't want to make this motion but because the guy who's going to get it is going to be from here. But I make a motion that if it's not in the by-laws that it would be in the by-laws, you missed two consecutive unexcused absences that -- what did you call them? The chairman and the CFO, is that what he is? Replace or take whatever steps necessary to replace that person or whoever they are.

Gilbert Harrison: I second that motion.

Mark Wadsworth: Go ahead, John.

John Lowery: Can I ask a question? I need you guys to tell me what an absence is. Now if we have a two or three-day meeting, is the absence the entire two to three-day meeting? Is the absence just one day? What is a total absence because we're talking about something vague? You need to tell me what an absence is because numerous times over the past three years, we've had individuals who come in here. They spend the day and they leave. Or they spend half a day and they say aye and they're here. I understand the frustration, but the thing is there's only been probably one instance of a person who has just missed multiple meetings in a row. Usually, people are popping in and popping out. I'm just saying, you need to be very specific what an absence is because if a person comes in here at 8:00 in the morning and says aye and I'm here, and they leave at 12:00. You don't see him until the next meeting, then they were present. Just be very specific.

Jerry McPeak: Mr. Chairman.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, Jerry.

Jerry McPeak: I will not amend it but clarify. I think he's got a very valid point. Again, because it keeps you guys out of hot water, a very valid point that they clarify that if a member shows up for any called meeting - this being a total

called meeting - and any session of that called meeting, and they are present for the meeting. You had to go a long way. I don't know why you're there. You may decide to be somewhere else while you're there. But if you're there for a portion of the meeting, you're there for the meeting.

Mark Wadsworth: I guess this includes also our conference call meetings. The motion on the floor is that if we have a current sitting council member and they missed two consecutive meetings without any valid excuse that John and myself will look into a replacement procedure as defined by the FACA.

Jerry McPeak: Your topic is over there. Leslie, you might put totally missed any of the meetings, because that would take into account when you say totally being a portion of it.

Gilbert Harrison: Mark, as the person seconding that motion. I accept McPeak's amendment. Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: Then moved and seconded. Any further discussion? Questions have been called. All those in favor, say aye.

Participants: Aye.

Mark Wadsworth: Any opposed? The motion carries. Sarah, I believe you have one other one that you wanted to bring.

Sarah Vogel: I think we've seen over the years the value which we heard about today from the presence of the Intertribal Agriculture Council outreach people working out in the field.

That is also a requirement of the Keepseagle settlement that for the six-year period, USDA have technical outreach people throughout the country. Leslie, was it at least 16? Was there a number attached?

Leslie Wheelock: No.

Sarah Vogel: But the six-year life of the settlement agreement is coming to a close in October 2016. I think that the information flow out, the assistance, working with so many farmers and so many tribes has been very valuable. The information that the council gets from the Intertribal Agricultural Council reports that we've received virtually every meeting has been valuable. I think that that should go along in tandem with the council. It's this special outreach to Native American farmers and ranchers through the Intertribal Agriculture Council and that connection, I think, should be maintained after the six-year life of the settlement agreement.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, Angela.

Angela Peter: We have two representatives in Alaska. I know that I had testified or whatever earlier that I'm not quite sure what their role is. Is there some place that says what exactly they do? How can, I guess, the measurements of success be available in Alaska? I would really like to know that.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, and Sarah, I would like to kind of chime in a little bit to. We had a past request to this council

for an individual group to get funding before and we didn't think that was appropriate for this council to single out separate organizations. If we're going to play by those rules, we better stick to them. It's just my comment.

Sarah Vogel: Actually, I don't think the settlement agreement specified IAC. I think it just specified technical assistance. There shall be technical assistance. I think that's the way it was, so I apologize.

Leslie Wheelock: If I may, sir? It's called the Technical Assistance Network. It's that the FSA and the Office of Tribal Relations were to establish a technical assistance network to work with tribes throughout the United States. I don't know how the vehicle was chosen, but that's the result of that language is that IAC has had a standing contract that has been managed through the Office of Tribal Relations for the last four years, I want to say. That has resulted in the network that is in place right now. We collect funding or consolidate funding from throughout USDA in order to fund that network. It's currently -- oh gosh, I'm going to forget what the number was because I wasn't ready for this conversation. John, do you remember what the total funding is for the network?

John Lowery: For a year?

Leslie Wheelock: Yeah.

John Lowery: One point --

Leslie Wheelock: Is it \$1.6 million? So it's currently funded at \$1.6 million. There's an administrative fee that comes off of the top of that. That administrative fee is used in order to hire people into the Office of Tribal Relations. It pays for two fulltime employees in the office and a little bit of travel. So that's where the funding goes. That's how much it has been. It has not changed since the first contract was established.

Last year, as a result of going through the interdepartmental review of the contract and of the funding for the contract, we were asked, what the measurements were that we're used in order to determine whether we were getting value for money. There were no measurements in place. So we established measurements which the IAC currently is trying to keep. Having said it on their first meeting to implement the measurements, it's been a little bit rough going, but they think they're getting better at it. They do report to me on those measurements, which I can make available to the council.

Mark Wadsworth: Jerry McPeak.

Jerry McPeak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On a briefer note, the USDA, in regard to where it's funding the IAC and those slots. That will be a yes or no question.

Leslie Wheelock: Yes.

Mark Wadsworth: To kind of bring this into context then. Would you like to readdress that resolution maybe at a further meeting and table the motion at this time?

Sarah Vogel: I would like to withdraw the resolution I made. I apologize for making it specific to IAC. I think what I would consider doing if it were all right is that it is the sense of the council that the enhanced services to Native American farmers and ranchers and tribes as provided by the settlement agreement in section D-1 of paragraph whatever should be continued after the expiration of the settlement agreement. We could either make that resolution today or it could be put in in another time. It is enhanced services to tribes and tribal members.

Mark Wadsworth: The motion has been withdrawn. I think when we get to a point that we want to iron that out, I would entertain the resolution of that. Just a comment, I'm just saying, if there was anybody else that want to do it right now.

Sarah Vogel: Let me ask Leslie, what your thought is, would our next meeting which might be in December be timely? Is this something that needs to be planned out and thought about in terms of potential budgets, work here and stuff like that?

Leslie Wheelock: This is Leslie. In terms of the budget, the department has proceeded forward with budgetary request and appropriations for the time being as if the settlement agreement

were not ending and the period not ending. I've been talking to Chris about what to do in the event that something bounces up and kind of bites us and that network is immediately terminated or that funding, there's an immediate request to terminate the funding. So we were talking about what we do and what kind of an agreement we need once the settlement agreement ends if we want to continue that relationship. We've been very specific about continuing it with IAC and not instituting a different network in its place.

So for the time being, we think we have a safety net for it but I wouldn't call it much more than a safety net. We do not have a way of continuing it. In the event that we end up with an acting secretary, my biggest concern is that politics, being what they are and a big political race coming up and having as a secretary one of the co-funders of a prominent Democratic candidates race in the last election, in the election cycle two cycles ago. We might not have our secretary through the end of the term. That's my concern.

It's not so much with the network. I think we can keep the network going through internal contracts and agreements. I think my concern is that the secretary still needs to be in place in order to sign a document. If our current acting deputy secretary stays in place, I don't think we'll have a problem. But I do not know and I cannot predict what will happen.

Sarah Vogel: Good. Then maybe when we send a letter to the secretary with our recommendations, we could refine it. But I think I would like to make the motions here today that --

[End of file]

[End of transcript]

USDA - Council for Native American Farming and Ranching - Part 2  
March 27, 2015

Sarah Vogel: -- the enhanced services as described in the settlement agreement at - insert the proper paragraph - be continued after the expiration of the mandatory period provided by the settlement agreement. That would be my motion.

Mark Wadsworth: Is there a second? Then moved and seconded for the motion on the technical, TA network.

Sarah Vogel: Enhanced services including the Technical Assistance Network.

Mark Wadsworth: Any further discussion? I just think that we're just asking for that funding to be available. We can't predict what's in the future, how that will be awarded or whatever. We're just wanting to have a constant stream of flow

of money for technical assistance and outreach within Indian country. I think we're all on board on that.

Any who'll call the question? All those in favor, say aye.

Participants: Aye.

Mark Wadsworth: Any opposed? The motion carries.

Gilbert Harrison: Mark?

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, Gilbert?

Gilbert Harrison: I would like to be excused. I have to get to the airport for my flight. And Jerry, please don't make another motion. Thank you very much. You all have a safe trip home.

Mark Wadsworth: At this time, Gilbert is going to excuse himself from the meeting. If there is no further recommendation, I think that we are at the point of discussing the upcoming calendar year for meetings. I believe our next one will be a conference call meeting.

Leslie Wheelock: Sorry, Mr. Chairman. It is my understanding also that the next meeting is via conference call. That's correct. It's on our calendar. Josiah, do you know where that is on our calendar? We've got it. Yeah, April, May, June. So it's toward the end of June?

Mark Wadsworth: It'll be behind Tab 9.

Leslie Wheelock: Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: John Lowery will help us through this next section on the upcoming meeting dates. We're on Section 9. I wonder who made these things up.

John Lowery: It was me and Stephanie, my wonderful intern, with Josiah helping every once in a while. What I've got down here is upcoming dates, June 12, 2015 teleconference.

Leslie Wheelock: What time?

John Lowery: I don't know. We haven't decided yet.

Teleconference, we usually do these in the afternoon. So I think in the past, we've done from 1:00 to 4:00 or 1:00 to 5:00. So June 12th.

Jerry McPeak: Mr. Chairman?

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, Jerry.

Jerry McPeak: From a standpoint of about every week but this week in particular, Fridays and Mondays are horrible from the standpoint of things happening about everything in my life. But would be possible to have those in like Tuesday or Wednesday or is there anything special about the 12th? Could we probably moderate that to June 8th or make it a Tuesday?

Male Voice: I'll write that down.

Mark Wadsworth: Actually, if you guys go to Tab 10, there is a three-month calendar. June 8th is a Monday.

Jerry McPeak: Monday? So 14th is Sunday. Are you on the 15th?

Female Voice: The 9th or 16th.

John Lowery: I think that the way that we came up with this date was that it's like three months from today. It was close to that. So I mean it was just one those. There was nothing specific about June 12th. It was just trying to balance it out. That's all.

Jerry McPeak: [Inaudible]

Porter Holder: Fifteenth I can't make. I've got a court date on the 15th.

John Lowery: You might have to change that.

Porter Holder: We may have to change. That is unexcusable.

Male Voice: We're not changing it.

Mark Wadsworth: The next proposed meeting date for the conference call is being proposed on June 16th. Do we have a time that we'd like to look at or does anybody have conflict?

Female Voice: That's good.

Male Voice: That should be good.

Mark Wadsworth: Angela, what time is best for you, considering in Washington time?

Angela Peter: I'm so mixed up right now. I'm behind over there. Let's see. So if we have it here at 1:00, it'll be 10:00?

Sarah Vogel: No.

Male Voice: Are you on Pacific, Angela?

Sarah Vogel: It's different.

Porter Holder: If we have it here at 1:00, it'll be like 4:00.

Angela Peter: It's four hours.

Porter Holder: It'll be like 4:00. If it's 1:00 in Washington, it'll be like 4:00 here. [Cross-talking]

Mark Wadsworth: That's how come we're in agriculture. We report by the sun. 1:00 Eastern time is 9:00 AM for her, which would be 10:00 for you, Ed, and then 11:00 for me.

Porter Holder: 12:00 here.

Mark Wadsworth: Yeah, 1:00 Eastern time.

Porter Holder: Dinnertime here.

Jerry McPeak: He has a club sandwich with [inaudible].

Mark Wadsworth: That's what I said, dinnertime. Now, John, you have my next meeting date if you'd like just to keep going.

John Lowery: Yes, sir. Next one is September 21st to the 23rd, it's going to be in Washington, D.C. So I already have a room booked at the USDA, so this is pretty much set unless something crazy happens. So 21st through 23rd.

Male Voice: Can you say it again?

John Lowery: September 21st through the 23rd in D.C. That will be at the U.S. Department of Ag.

Porter Holder: The meeting?

John Lowery: Yes, sir. I reserved the room in January just so I won't get bumped by somebody's retirement party. We do a lot of retirements at USDA. There are multiple rooms taken up for

multiple retirements all the time so important stuff just like this gets bumped.

Mark Wadsworth: End of the fiscal year, huh?

John Lowery: True story.

Female Voice: [Inaudible]

Mark Wadsworth: Just as long as it's not a two-day block.

John Lowery: And then this should say tentatively scheduled, not attentatively [sounds like] scheduled. I don't know who did that. That wasn't me. So December 7 through 11, 2015 is the IAC conference. Of course we've been there the past three years, but, you know, that's still a few months off.

Sarah Vogel: Can you give us that date again?

John Lowery: Yes ma'am, December 7th through 11th. So that's it for the calendar year.

Mark Wadsworth: I think those dates are pretty much agreeable to everybody at this time. I would also like to -- I kind of talked a little bit with John also, and I have not talked with my council about it, but having a possible next year June meeting in Fort Hall, Idaho. I would love to be able to show you guys out of the 540,000 acres that we have, pretty much about 45 percent is allotted and 55 percent is still under the tribe, but out of that whole land mass, we still retain about 97 percent ownership.

So if we were to have it at our reservation, we'd be able to show you our 90,000-plus acres of irrigated farmland from center pivots to our buffalo pastures by the Snake River to our natural spring flows, to our upper mountain regions during that time where we hunt, to fish and with all the range land in between. Just throwing that out there. Possibly I think that June would work the best. It's not so hot and dusty yet. Just something that I'd like you guys to consider.

Leslie Wheelock: Mr. Chairman?

Mark Wadsworth: Yes?

Leslie Wheelock: At some point, you all might want to consider that invitation. Just as Oklahoma is a different place from what many of us are accustomed to, Alaska is a very different place from what some of us are accustomed to. We will have to put out two hats in order to collect the funding for that trip, but definitely it would be worth your while. I would recommend taking up that opportunity when it comes up. Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, Jerry?

Jerry McPeak: Thank you Mr. Chairman. We flipping sure want to make this a summer trip? We don't want to make this -- what is this month now, March? I ain't going to Alaska in March. I won't miss two in a row, but I'm not going to Alaska in March.

[Cross-talking]

Mark Wadsworth: Carrying on with the agenda then. We're sitting at the -- I think we pretty much have, went through the bottom three. I guess discussing the overall meeting that we had today. I believe that Janie Hipp -- I had stepped out a little bit so I came in during the last part of her request I believe she was making for us, for the youth. I don't know if she wanted that in our resolution or requested or just a support. I don't know.

Porter Holder: I think it's just for support.

Mark Wadsworth: Just support? Okay.

Porter Holder: Got to find anything -- this is Porter. Kind of what I gather from what she was -- if anybody knows of any organizations or anything that could help fund some of these kids. It's kind of what she was asking, try to help them to get to university for that summit. I don't think she was asking us for a resolution. I think she was asking us if we knew anywhere she could get out some money to help get these kids there. It was my understanding.

Mark Wadsworth: I appreciate that. Yes, Jerry?

Jerry McPeak: Thank you. Along those lines, Edward and Derrick, maybe whoever else. Ours is different, and I understand that. I don't want to say there's not any tribe in Oklahoma that can afford it, but there are tribes of any size population, plus something - I don't know how much population -

can afford to send their kids because it's just next door for us. We don't have the travel problems you have. But is it a problem for you guys, for your tribes to fund a couple of kids to go to that thing? Is that a deal that can't be done?

Male Voice: Actually, we send our children, our students, tribal member students. Sometimes we'll go on that a little bit. If the student writes a really nice letter to the tribal council, we'll send them. But for our tribal student, they're allowed so much per year to travel to D.C. We send groups to D.C. We have three tribal members, young members, they were officers in UNITY so they would travel to D.C. with UNITY. We would help them. Every tribal member, every student at this school, there is a 2.0 average, they have a certain allotted amount that they can receive annually for just that purpose. Sometimes it's not to travel to a function of this council. It may be to D.C. for strictly like an internship in D.C. We'll foot the bill. We do that for them. We have a higher ed that will -- have a lot of money to send them to wherever they want to go to vocational or they want to go to a four-year.

Jerry McPeak: Well, I really, really like Janie Hipp, but I wasn't sure this deal would work. But for you folks who can come up with money from your tribes, that deal is worthwhile. If you can get your own kids in it for whatever strings you got to -- that deal. And my daughter only went as a counselor, but

that deal was better than marketed even. Don't you think?

Josiah, were you there?

Josiah Griffin: [Inaudible]

Jerry McPeak: It was better than marketed. I'm concerned about the 10 days a little bit, but it was better than marketed.

Porter Holder: After visiting with them kids on their business plans and all, I was impressed. I think they come away from there with so much that it's money well spent, wherever it comes from.

Leslie Wheelock: We were at a pause. I just want to make sure that whoever is listening to this tape and trying to do a transcription isn't concerned. We'll be back with it in a minute.

Derrick Lente: Actually, I've got something to say to the council. I had a visit with my local USDA office in regards to the funds that were set aside for the disaster forage relief program I think it is to the USDA. Correct me if I'm wrong with that title. In any event, when I went out there - and again, because I'm a smaller land cattle producer - I won't say they basically turned me away, but I was sent away because my land base wasn't enough to generate the types of fund where they felt that it would worth my while to participate in that program because a lot of the lands that I run my cattle on are irrigated

acres, and they told me that that didn't apply but that it was only for rangeland cattle that that would apply for.

I thought to myself, well, that kind of puts a lot of the Native American people in a disadvantage because we don't have the large acreages of land that non-Indians do and would be able to participate in a program like this. And so I bring that to the council's attention because that was my recent interaction and reflection of the experience. And so perhaps you might want to look at that program again. And if it can be extended to smaller producers, smaller people that has small acreages, I think that it goes a long way especially for the Indian producer. Thank you.

Jim Radintz: This is Jim Radintz with FSA. I'm not terribly familiar with the Livestock Forage Disaster Program, but I don't think there are those kinds of limits on it.

Porter Holder: Jim, I'm sorry. We don't have a quorum now.

Jim Radintz: Okay.

Porter Holder: So what do we do? What is the protocol for this?

John Lowery: Adjourn the meeting and then whatever discussion -

-

Porter Holder: Okay. We need to adjourn the meeting. I need a motion.

Male Voice: I'll make a motion we adjourn.

Derrick Lente: I second that.

Jerry McPeak: Wait a minute.

Porter Holder: We don't have a quorum, Jerry.

Jerry McPeak: Oh, okay.

Porter Holder: We can continue discussing, but we've got to stop the meeting.

Jerry McPeak: I'm going to say John, Josiah, Leslie, I want to say this to some more people over here. I apologize by not getting to say it to more people here. I've gotten a lot of nice things said about myself. John has done a wonderful job doing this. I pointed this out to John this morning. The first ones of these meetings we had, John had to tell us -- every other sentence, he had to be with us. He has done a great job of organizing this because it's run very smoothly without much of his intervention, so therefore we're like, well, you know, what's John doing?

John organized this so well and had it so well done that it didn't need that. Josiah, we had to call him a lot because we didn't know things. I assure you that you'll get a response. I'm not sure who he has to grab by the ear up there, but sometimes when I can't get a hold of all those two, Josiah will get us an answer. So Josiah, a great job. Janice felt really comfortable in calling you, getting things done. And obviously, all that begins with management from the top, so, Leslie, it's

been very good. You all did a really, really good job. John, super, super job [inaudible]. We've got lots of compliments, but I think probably part of them belong on you guys' heads. Thank you.

John Lowery: Well, Leslie is pretty much the smartest person in the USDA, and without her and her leadership, I don't know how in the world we'd function.

Jerry McPeak: Does she do I think your pay rates too?

John Lowery: No. I do want to thank Josiah because he has helped me out tremendously, and he will continue to help out as I go on an exodus for 90 days. But thank you, Jerry. Thank you, Janice. She was wonderful. Ryan's assistant whose name slips my mind at the moment - she was wonderful. Thank you, Sharon or Sherry, someone like -- Carolyn [phonetic], she was wonderful too.

You are correct. This meeting is supposed to work without much interference from me. You guys are the council. You're supposed to operate as one. So as long as everything is running smoothly, I can be quiet. I can sit in the corner and just let you guys work. So thank you.

Jerry McPeak: [Inaudible] if you've got more prints, [indiscernible] I didn't know that and you guys did.

Female Voice: [Inaudible]

Jerry McPeak: Prints like this. If you'd like to have one or two, but it's like - please help yourself. I think I've got one of these already. I want you to [inaudible].

Porter Holder: We have a motion on the floor to adjourn the meeting. I need a second.

Male Voice: I second that motion.

Porter Holder: Meeting dismissed.

Male Voice: All right.

[End of file]

[End of transcript]