



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

**Council for Native American Farming and Ranching**

September 26, 2014 - 8:30 AM  
Washington, DC

Mark Wadsworth: I think we ought to get started here. We will have a couple of our members leaving this afternoon so let's get to business and see how we end up. I guess we'll do the call to order, call the meeting and then I'll do a roll call and then, Gilbert, would you like to do the blessing again?

Gilbert Harrison: Yes.

Mark Wadsworth: Thank you. Okay, roll call. John Berrey. John Berrey is not here. Tawney Brunsch.

Tawney Brunsch: Here.

Mark Wadsworth: Gilbert Harrison.

Gilbert Harrison: Here.

Mark Wadsworth: Porter Holder.

Porter Holder: Here.

Mark Wadsworth: Derrick Lente.

Derrick Lente: Present.

Mark Wadsworth: Jerry McPeak. Jerry McPeak is not here. Angela Peter. Angela Peter is not here. Edward Soza. Edward Soza is not here. Mary Thompson.

Mary Thompson: Here.

Mark Wadsworth: Sarah Vogel.

Sarah Vogel: Here.

Mark Wadsworth: Mark Wadsworth. I'm here. Chris Beyerhelm.

Chris Beyerhelm: Here.

Mark Wadsworth: Val Dolcini. Val Dolcini is not here. Dr. Joe Leonard. Dr. Joe Leonard is not here. And Leslie Wheelock will be here shortly. Everybody stand and we'll have a quick blessing.

Gilbert Harrison: Lord, we come before you today for our meeting. We're thankful that we've had a very good meeting so far. We'll continue. The meeting is set [inaudible] the Council that will be beneficial not only to USDA but all the native farmers and ranchers that we are charged to help in various ways. We pray this in your name, amen.

Mark Wadsworth: Thank you, Gilbert. Here's a review of the meeting materials. As you'll see, we all were handed a new agenda. There have been some changes made to the previous one. We'll go through the review of the meeting materials. I'll have John go over that, and I guess the review of the travel

information also. Then we'll go to the discussion to election of the chair, vice chair, and we need a prior discussion about this new position to the by-laws which we want to include a secretary position to the council. Also, we'll have then a discussion of election of the three positions of chair, vice chair, secretary.

From there we'll have a break about 9:30. After the break, we'll have election results. Then we'll carry on into Deputy Undersecretary Ann Bartuska and discuss the Federal Recognized Tribal Extension Program. From that, Leslie Wheelock would like to go over a review of the Office of Tribal Relations and give us an update. Then we'll go into the subcommittee discussions of the BIA facilitation, and conservation, council governance and structure, credits and credit desserts, education and extension, Forest Service and BLM, Bureau of Land Management, and responding to concerns and recommendations, and also discuss subsistence farming.

We'll have again our lunch break from 12:00 to 1:30. After we get back at 1:30, we'll have one hour of public comment period. We'll break and then the proceeding from about 2:45 on over, we'll review the first two years again, discuss our goals and concerns, and council issues and topics. Finally, we'll go with the next meeting and housekeeping items. We should be able

to adjourn after that. We do have a couple of people that will be leaving early at that time so we'll just see how that goes.

Mary Thompson: During the working session this afternoon, we were going to do the reply letter from the secretary. Could we add that to the working session?

Mark Wadsworth: Will that work, John?

John Lowery: Yes.

Male Voice: Mr. Chairman, just a point of clarification. Do we actually have a reply letter or are we talking about the recommendation letter we sent in?

John Lowery: We should have a reply letter in hand.

Male Voice: The check is in the mail?

John Lowery: The check is in the mail.

Mary Thompson: If the mail is received. Was it snail mail or email?

John Lowery: It's going to be snail mail. Mr. Chairman, well, I'm sorry. Is this the meeting --

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, this is the materials and travel information.

John Lowery: Yes, sir. So I did hand out an update agenda. There were two changes on here. One is that on 6 and 7 - discussion of election of chair, vice chair, and secretary - I included the words "and secretary" for 6 and 7. This was one of the recommendations made by one of our subcommittees. It was

the creation of a secretary position. With that change, I do have proposed language for the by-laws so that we can include the position. I would like to go over that during the discussion of the election of the chair and vice chair. I do have the language. We can put it up. If you guys agree to it, fine. If you want to modify it, fine. If you don't want to do it, fine. But I just want us to have that in the by-laws prior to appointing someone as the secretary.

Also the other notice we'll change is on down for the Office of Tribal Relations update. Leslie requested yesterday afternoon that we put that in the agenda. So what that would do instead of starting the subcommittee discussion at 10:25, we'll actually start the subcommittee discussion at 10:45, allowing her 20 minutes to do an update on what our office has been doing.

Another one of the recommendations from one of the subcommittees was that the Office of Tribal Relations would provide monthly reports. I think we did not provide the monthly report for August, but she will provide that today. And then we're also currently writing up our monthly report now for September so we would definitely get that to you guys as well. But I just wanted to include these, and then when we do get down to the subcommittee discussions we can actually highlight some of the things that we've done regarding what you guys have

recommended for us to do vis-à-vis the council agenda and structure of the council.

Also, if there are no questions about that review of travel information, once again some of you will be leaving today, others tomorrow, the most important thing is to make sure you get your hotel receipt and any other receipt. If you taxied over here, if you metro-ed over here, any of those receipts, please keep those and also the travel document which I handed out to you yesterday, I think. I will get you an electronic copy of that as well by at least Monday morning. Just fill it out, send us your receipts and we will do our best to have you reimbursed as quickly as possible.

If you do forget your hotel receipt, you can always call back here to the Holiday Inn and have them email you a copy. Other than that, that's it. Is there any question about travel? Okay.

Gilbert Harrison: John, this is Gilbert from Navajo. The handouts, the notebooks, and all these information, can your office mail that back to our home?

John Lowery: We can.

Gilbert Harrison: Thank you very much.

John Lowery: Yes, sir. He's going to work me. Anyone else wants that, our office can definitely pack it all together and UPS it to you.

Mark Wadsworth: Also John, have we had any written public comments --

John Lowery: No, sir. We received no written comments. We did get an email from some vague email address that always emails every time one of our Federal Register notices go out, wanting to know how come we did not do this meeting via teleconference, and we're spending too much money, and we don't need to be bringing people to D.C. He cc'd the president of the United States, and the speaker of the House, and the vice president. But it's a common thing when you work for the federal government. Other than that, no sir.

Mark Wadsworth: So there is a possibility there may be a change in the afternoon.

John Lowery: Yeah. Maybe. Maybe.

Mark Wadsworth: If you'd like, too, John, you said you had meeting materials or the actual written proposal to the by-laws on the secretary position. If you would like to go through with that, we'll just carry on.

John Lowery: Everyone has a copy of the by-laws from yesterday? What I am proposing, I'm going to hand it out to you and also pull it up on the screen for you to see.

Mark Wadsworth: I think we'll be in Section 6, Role of Board Officials, if I'm reading this correctly.

John Lowery: Yes, sir. It's Section 6, Role of Board Officials. In there you have members for A, and in B you have chairman or chairwoman referred to as chair, and their role is C. You have vice chair, and then what I am bringing forth is to put a D there which should be secretary. What I put together was the secretary will take roll at the beginning of each meeting and identify those members present and those absent. (b) The secretary shall record all recommendations made and approved by the council. (c) The secretary shall provide a copy of all recommendations approved by the council to the chairperson and DFO. Those are my proposed changes.

The reason this was proposed was we would have discussions. I'm sorry. You guys will have discussions, and people who are making recommendations, they're making seconds, making motions, and nobody was keeping up with what was being put out there. We just need to make sure that somebody is identified to write down what those recommendations are, and what those motions are, and what is approved by the council.

This person, we did not discuss him taking notes, being a note taker or anything like that. Just a person who will say, hey, this is the motion that's on the floor. These are the words verbatim, and this is what was passed by the council. This was what discussed in the subcommittee for governance of the council.

This is just proposed language. You guys are the council members, so I definitely want to hear from you. Just like I said, this was not proposed as a note taker. This was just to propose someone who will (a) take roll, you know, just say who's here and who is not; and also the person who can tell us this motion is on the floor and the motion is blah, blah, blah.

Chris Beyerhelm: Mr. Chairman, John, just a question. Our experience from this last set of recommendations is almost all of those got generated from subcommittees which I thought was a very efficient way to do it. I understand what you're saying during a general meeting if ideas come up. So maybe we need to have a discussion about in the future, how are we going to do recommendations? Are they going to come out at general sessions or are they going to come out at subcommittees? In which case, I'm not sure we would need the position of a secretary if they're all going to come out -- not all but a majority would come out at subcommittees. I'll just throw it out there.

Mark Wadsworth: Anybody else has a comment? Yes, Sarah.

Sarah Vogel: I think it will be interesting thing to discuss just in general what the duties of the designated federal officer, also known as John, are. But apart from that, if there is a secretary, I think there is one other aspect that a secretary could be helpful and that would be to be the person who takes clear responsibility for reviewing the minutes because

we have verbatim minutes - the young lady in the back with her headphones on. Sooner or later, we're going to have every single word written down and all of the chaos that I've seen in the minutes in the past. I think that John has always sent those minutes out to us for review, to fill in the names and do this and that. But I haven't seen a whole lot of uptake from members of the council to help him on that. So if there was one person who felt that was their particular responsibility to review the minutes and work with John to have accurate names and recordings and words and so on, I think that would be a good thing if there were a secretary.

I'm not right now sure that we need a secretary. I think taking roll is something that the chairman kind of does in convening the meeting. I'm not sure that that's a central duty. Recording of recommendations made and approved by the council, that's also something the chairman could do to make sure that we are clear before there is a vote by asking the person who is making the recommendation to be clear.

And then the recording of all recommendations to the DFO, that again goes back to the first question about what is the DFO's role in gathering up the recommendations? But I think it's worth talking about. I'm not opposed to having a secretary, but I'm not sure this is --

Derrick Lente: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have to echo the sentiments of Ms. Vogel. Although I'm a newcomer to this council, I don't know or I don't see where a secretary is necessarily essential to the actions of this council just by way of the identification that she pointed out that we do have somebody working the audio. We do have the DFO that seems to be very competent in his ability to get us information and provide us whatever we need. Unless you want to add a third part to the chair, vice chair and then add a secretary, that's fine. Like I said, I'm not opposed to it. But at the same time, I don't know if I see the necessary, essential aspect of adding a secretary. Thank you.

Gilbert Harrison: Good morning. This is Gilbert from Navajo. I do agree with Derrick. I don't think it is essential. I have not heard who recommended this and I know I didn't recommend it. It seems we've done okay before without a secretary, so I feel that maybe it's not necessary. Thank you very much.

Mark Wadsworth: Does anybody else have a comment? Seeing that there is no other comment, I think that we could -- yes, Gilbert again.

Gilbert Harrison: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to go ahead and make a motion that we delay or we defer the addition of a

secretary in our by-laws and maybe recall at a later date if there's a necessity for it. Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: Are there any further discussion? The motion has been made, any second? To defer the position of secretary to a further date on more experience, I guess, with the council.

Derrick Lente: I'll second that motion.

Mark Wadsworth: It's been moved and seconded. We're going to call the question. All those in favor of deferring this secretary position to a further date and for further discussion, raise your hand. One hundred percent in favor. None opposed. The motion carries. I guess we're just going to have to go right into the discussion of the election of the chair and vice chair at this time.

John Lowery: I want to note that Chairman Berrey is here. So with the election of the chairperson coming up and with us not having a chairperson at this time, what we've done in the past when the council was first created, the first DFO actually ran this part of the meeting, the election and the discussion and all of that. So that's what I propose to do now so that no one feels there's any type of bias towards anyone. That being said, yes, ma'am?

Mary Thompson: Do we have to do that in form of a motion?

John Lowery: No.

Mary Thompson: Okay. Thank you.

John Lowery: We do have two positions on the council. One is for chair, and one is for the vice chair. Just so everyone is clear about the duties and the roles of chair and the vice chair, in your by-laws under Section 6, the chairman or chairwoman referred to as chair, the chair works with the DFO to identify issues which must be addressed and serves as the focal point for the council's membership. In addition, the chair is responsible for certifying the accuracy of minutes developed by the DFO to document council meetings. The chair typically acts as the spokesperson for the council. The chair is the link between councilmembers and the DFO. The chair will prepare and include a chair's letter with submittal of all recommendations to the secretary via the DFO. The letter will include a statement of how decisions were made that led to the recommendations.

Vice chair - in the absence of the chair, the vice chair will fulfill the duties of the chair. So according to the by-laws, these are the duties and responsibilities of the chair and vice chair. Please feel free to jump in.

I think if there is no discussion with regard to just the roles of the vice chair and the chair, I think we should go into making motions for the chair position of the council. What I have done is I have printed out strips of paper here for

individuals to write the name of the person that they want as their chair, and also write the name of the person that they want as the vice chair. I think that this is a pretty decent way to do it. Pretty much democracy at its best. I do think we do need to put forth individuals to be nominated and those individuals should be seconded, and then we should have a paper vote. Once the paper vote is done for the chair and the vice chair, I will tally it up and I will announce if that's fine with everyone.

At this time, we will open the floor for nominations for chair of the Council for Native American Farming and Ranching. This person will serve as chair for the two-year term. As you see, these are the duties and responsibilities of the chairperson. The floor is open.

Mary Thompson: DFO John.

John Lowery: Yes, ma'am.

Mary Thompson: I would like to nominate Mark to continue to serve as chairperson because I believe that this council needs the continuity and other starting sometime might have problems with Mark.

John Berrey: I'm going to second.

Mary Thompson: He's done a fine job and all. I'll make that motion.

John Lowery: So Mary has nominated Mark Wadsworth and John Berrey has seconded the motion. Any other?

Male Voice: I move that the nomination be closed.

John Lowery: Second? Okay, there has been a motion to close and a second. Is there any discussion on the nomination being closed?

Gilbert Harrison: Good morning. Mark, I guess just a couple of comments. I would like to see the chair, besides the duties here, in working with the DFO, maybe provide a monthly or update of things that are happening. I think that's what we were lacking the last time, if there's anything, either by email or by a quick conference call. I think that would be appropriate. Otherwise, we will meet here twice a year and in between, we don't get too much information. So I think I would like to see that be a little more activity in that area. So now that you're the sole person, we'd like to ask if you can make sure that there is some communication. It doesn't have to be earthshattering, but at least let us know what's going on. Thank you very much.

John Lowery: Thank you, Gilbert. If there's no discussion, all in favor of closing the nomination process, say aye.

All: Aye.

John Lowery: All opposed. With that, Mark, welcome. You are the new chair.

Mark Wadsworth: I sure appreciate the honor. I really do. One of the situations responding to Gilbert just as you were talking, maybe we can just send out a monthly calendar of which committees are meeting and when they're meeting. Anybody is welcome to cross the lines of joining another committee discussion if they'd like to, so that you guys know when the other committees are scheduled to meet and what's going on. I think in that way, it would help with what your curiosity of what interests you the most. I don't think that would be hard to do.

Also, to carry on with the elections, we have the position of the vice chair to be decided. We'll open that for nominations.

Mary Thompson: I nominate Porter Holder.

Mark Wadsworth: It's been moved and seconded to nominate Porter Holder as vice chair. Any other nominations? All those in favor of ceasing nominations for vice chair, say aye.

All: Aye.

Mark Wadsworth: Any opposed? I guess by virtue, you're vice chair, Porter.

Porter Holder: Thank you all very much. That means a lot to me. Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: Officially, all those in favor of Porter Holder to be vice chair for the Council for Native American Farming and Ranching, please say aye.

All: Aye.

Mark Wadsworth: Any opposed? The motion carries.  
Unanimous decision.

Porter Holder: Does that mean everybody likes me? This doesn't happen very often here.

John Lowery: Mr. Chairman, we do have a few moments before our break. We will have a break at 9:30 and then we're going to have Deputy Undersecretary Ann Bartuska from the Research Education and Extension come in and speak. I would like to, if the council would not mind, for us to look at the duties of the designated federal officer just so everyone will know, seeing how we have been over the chair and the vice chair. Is that fine with everybody? Mr. Chairman, you're fine with that?

Mark Wadsworth: You bet.

John Lowery: Also, I was told by Allison [phonetic] that there are only four mics can be on at a time. So when there's more than four and when the fifth one cuts on, then the first one that was on cuts off. Just FYI.

This is also under Section C, the roles and duties of the designated federal officer. The designated federal officer is a designee of the director of the Office of Tribal Relations for

all council activities. The DFO serves as the government's agent for all matters related to the council's activities. The DFO must approve or call the meetings of the council; develop and approve agendas; attend all meetings; adjourn the meetings when such adjournment is in the public interest - that means whenever someone gets out of hand - receive and transmit the council's recommendations and coordinate USDA's response to the recommendations back to the council.

In addition, the DFO is responsible for providing adequate staff support to the council, including the performance of the following functions: notifying members of the time and place for such a meeting; maintaining records for all meetings including subgroup or working group activities as required by the National Archives and Records Administration; maintaining the roll; preparing the minutes of all meetings of the council's deliberations, including subgroup and working group activities; attending to official correspondence; maintaining official council records and filing all papers and submissions prepared for by the council, including those items generated by subgroups and working groups; acting as the council's agent to collect, validate, and pay all vouchers for preapproved expenditures; and preparing and handling all reports, including the annual report as required by FACA.

At the end of each fiscal year, which is due on Tuesday, I have to provide a report that has to be sent to the Library of Congress, which is pretty much what we have done as a council. Pretty much any documents that you guys are given have to be submitted to the Library of Congress so that they are able to, you know, when someone goes and start digging 50 years from now to find out what this council did, there's a trail there. So we also have to approve a budget and provide what was spent on conducting business with the council. Just like I said, that's due September 30th of each year, and I'm actually running behind so I need to go to work tomorrow.

Anyway, these are my duties. I do my best to fulfill them. I do fall short at times so I'm not going to lie to you, but we do do our best to get you guys all the information needed. As we discussed yesterday when this council first started, we were sort of trying to figure out what to do with it. Regarding reports, our office has been trying to provide those monthly reports to you. We do have to provide monthly reports to the secretary each month. so what we try to do is take that report and modify it and send it out to you guys.

Regarding the subcommittees, listening to Chris speak, I love the fact that these subcommittees are coming up with these recommendations and putting them out there. I think that that is a plus. I think that probably is the best way to conduct

business around recommendations so maybe we can keep on doing that.

Other than that, are there any other questions regarding the duties of the chair or the vice chair or the duties of myself as DFO?

Chris Beyerhelm: Mr. Chairman, I don't have any questions. But those of you not familiar with federal government, our year ends at the end of September, and it's performance rating time. Ms. Wheelock is going to have to evaluate John. I had served on other committees and I currently serve on other committees, and I just want to say that John, you do the best job of any DFO that I had ever experienced on any committees. I want to congratulate you on that.

Gilbert Harrison: Gilbert from Navajo. John, besides your DFO duties, what other duties do you perform at the Office of Tribal Relations? Thank you. Besides anything else assigned.

[Inaudible]

John Lowery: What I do, just me and not including Josiah [phonetic] or including any intern who we have working with us, what I do is we do a lot of casework in our office. We do a lot of working with other councils. We do a lot of work with other fellow agencies. We do a lot of meetings with tribal leaders. We do a lot of traveling to meet tribal leaders. We do a lot of followup - a lot. I mean, it's a lot. We do a lot.

It's really hard for me to sit here and say I do A, B, C, D, E, F, G. But whatever is coming down the pipe, that's what we're doing. So currently we're working on the export session for the National Council of American Indians. We're currently working on a trip that the secretary will make to Indian Country. We have been working with the White House Council on Native American Affairs on climate change, on education, and also their Economic Development Subcommittee. We're currently working with our sister agencies with the MOU on sacred sites. We're currently working with the Bureau of Indian Affairs on MOUs between the National Resources Conservation Service and also with rural development. We are always asked for data calls around what all is going on within USDA. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Leslie Wheelock: And we're trying to open the black box for all this.

John Lowery: We're trying to open the black box. So when I see people just like Mike here in the back who works for a Foreign Service Agency under Chris, we depend on him a lot. When things are happening within Foreign Service Agency and we need something, I have to go to Mike because in my mind, Mike is the subject matter expert. Mike has to educate me so I can educate tribal members.

That's what we do a lot. I talk to Rick Gibson a lot about different legal issues whether it's with Keepseagle, whether

it's with the council, whether it's just trying to keep me from the front page of the *Washington Post*. We do a lot. I can call Kathryn. I can email her or I can text her. It's just whatever is happening, we're just always going. Seriously, I wish I can give 50 percent of my time to this council because you guys deserve at least 50 percent of a staffer's time on this council. I cannot give that to you, but I do give you as much as I can.

Gilbert Harrison: John, one more. I know that you have all these things going, but would you have time by invitation to come out to the field to address some of the regional farmers and ranchers? Because on Navajo, in Southwest, we do have occasion to have these conferences and stuff like that.

John Lowery: I do know if we cannot get out there, we do our best to get our state people there. We work a lot with the state FSA director and the state rural development executive director and also with the NRCS state conservationist to make sure that there are people there. I do know that in the past, our staff has held a veterans meeting out there with you guys. I know we've also had people attend the regional conservation programs out there. So yeah, we do our best to get out there, whether it's us or whether it's somebody in the field. That's the beauty of USDA, is that we do have a lot of people on the ground and in the field, and usually there is a good working relationship there. If people are coming to us with an issue,

it's usually something that cannot be solved at the local or state level.

Mark Wadsworth: Also John, for everyone's information within the council, maybe if you could bring your staff up to introduce them to us. Is it just you two?

John Lowery: Josiah is stuck on the metro, the Red Line which is a disaster every day. But this is us and Josiah. She's the boss. She's the brains.

Mark Wadsworth: Thank you, John. Well, we're right on time at 9:30 so let's have a 15-minute break.

Gilbert Harrison: If time permits, it was nice to visit with the secretary last year, Secretary Vilsack. Maybe sometime within the next meeting or so, maybe on behalf of the council invite him to share a couple of minutes with us. Thank you.

Mary Thompson: One thing, Mr. Chairman. Maybe in the next time slot, the 9:45 time slot if we're not using it, I have an invitation I'd like to extend to the committee and to USDA if you'd allow me time then. Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: That's workable for me. All right, we will break for 15 minutes.

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United States Department of Agriculture  
Council for Native American Farming and Ranching  
September 26, 2014 - 9:45 AM

Mark Wadsworth: Okay, everybody, if you could take a seat. Just for the record, Leslie Wheelock is here in attendance. Also, Mary Thompson asked if she could have a little invitation. Mary, would you like to make your announcement?

Mary Thompson: Thank you, Chairman. I have a letter and I'll just read it. Some of the folks who are standing outside are the ones I want to invite too, that's why I asked them to step in. Thank you. I'll just read this letter if that's okay.

September 24, 2014. Members of the Council for Native American Farmers and Ranchers and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington D.C. Dear Councilmembers and USDA: Members of the Southwestern Resource Conservation and Development Council are

hosting the annual meeting of the Southeastern RC&D councils on June 21st through the 24th, 2015. This meeting of RC&Ds from nine states will be held in Western North Carolina at the Cherokee Harrah's Hotel. We would like to invite each of you to attend.

We are planning this meeting as an update meeting for the RC&D councils, but also as importantly, as a cultural event integrating enrichment and artistic participation from the Cherokee as culture and agriculture have always been a Cherokee tradition. This is a good opportunity for outreach, for the Council for Native American Farmers and Ranchers and the USDA programs to educate rural, veteran, and American farmers and ranchers of available resources and with increased participation from tribal members. RC&D can offer you a special registration package, of which more specific information will be available in a few weeks. With nine states participating, you would have the opportunity to contact those tribal members you have partnered with or those you wish to partner with. We are now working out the details and would be happy to send further information to you.

Best regards. Mary Ann Thompson, Councilmember for the Southwestern North Carolina RC&D Council; and Anita D. Pal [phonetic], administrator for the Southwestern North Carolina RC&D Council.

We do hope and I had hoped to offer this invitation to some of the other folks who are here presenting yesterday, whether it's the NASS program or any other programs that need our help in getting and distributing information to our target audience which are rural, veteran Indian farmers and ranchers.

John Lowery: What is the date again?

Mary Thompson: The date is June 21st through the 24th, 2015. You're cordially invited and we hope you will attend. I'd be glad to send further information or get this to John if anyone is interested. Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: Thank you, Mary. Deputy Undersecretary Ann Bartuska is here in attendance and would like to discuss the Federal Recognized Tribal Extension Program or FRTEP. Go ahead, Ann.

Ann Bartuska: Good morning. Thank you very much. It's a real pleasure for me to be here and to be asked to meet with you. I would also like to acknowledge that Tim Grosser from NIFA is also here in the audience, so any hard questions he gets to answer. I appreciate being able to talk today about FRTEP, and I will definitely get to some of my thoughts on that program. I also thought, since I have an opportunity here, to maybe share a few other ideas and thoughts for you from the research, education, and economics part of the USDA because there are quite a few things of course regularly happening in our

organization that it seems to me could be of interest to all of you.

Just a little bit about myself. I've been in this position for four years, as deputy undersecretary. I previously worked for 21 years with the Forest Service and so I know many of the organizations and the activities out on the land, dealing with the National Forest, as well as my partners in the natural resource world. But I am a scientist and I come out of the research community primarily as an ecosystem ecologist, so I know a lot more about forest and rain than I do about agriculture. I've been learning quite a bit about what we need to do in addressing the issues of agriculture and agriculture production here within USDA.

The first thing I want to just mention in terms of where our thinking has been and is going in REE is really just to affirm and reinforce our commitment to working with the tribal colleges and universities in how we further their programs, as well as how do we improve the connections between those institutions and other colleges and universities that we have responsibility for. There is some tremendous capacity out there and I've had the privilege of visiting a few. I was just mentioning to Larry outside that I'm going to several locations in New Mexico in a few weeks to get out to see some of those institutions. Being able to see what the needs are but also what the capacity is and

what kinds of work is going on. Also, the enthusiasm of the students, which is one thing that we always enjoy seeing and connecting with when we have a chance to go to the institutions. We've also been exploring with the 4-H council on how we can enhance the outreach through 4-H to Indian country and increase our connectivity in a whole host of ways. The council I'm actually in and liaison or ex officio member of the advisory board of the council as is Dr. Muquarrab Qureshi, who is over the NIFA programs dealing with education. We both see the opportunities to go way beyond what we currently have in place to increase our visibility and our presence, not only with federal dollars but also bringing in the private sector and their investment. There are quite a few people on the council board who have a strong interest and again increasing capacity in stabilizing and bringing the tools that are needed in tribal lands to really address issues of health and stability in at-risk youth. This is an opportunity, I think, for us to continue to grow that program and to grow our connection.

Then the other thing that I wanted to in terms of new things that are happening, I'm going to send a piece of paper around. Thank you. Earlier this year, in response to challenges dealing with drought, flooding, and temperatures that are really affecting our agricultural production, our secretary announced the establishment of regional climate hubs. In this one-pager

is a very brief description of those. The idea of these hubs is to bring practical information to farmers, ranchers, foresters, and resource managers about how do you manage with increasing climate variability. Can we get better predictions so that we know what to anticipate whatever the climate is going to be doing in a particular year or a particular season? Being able to get ahead of these incredible swings that we've been seeing. To identify where areas are most vulnerable and put some resources there, either through science or conservation practices, as well as to be able to address emerging issues about resiliency and adaptation.

We may have crops that we're using right now -- genetic material that is just not going to be survivable in the future under some of this climate variability, but there are other types of genetic material we can be using from our germplasm collections. I think that's where some of the opportunities to work with tribal members, even as we've been addressing issues of traditional foods increasing, the opportunities and use of traditional foods, that very genetic material is out there with the potential to be able to be grown in areas that have more drought, more flooding, situations that we have not been prepared for, for quite a while in our improved seed material. We really want to work with those tribal colleges and universities that have been doing that kind of work, as well as

tribal members who have an interest, recognizing fully that there are intellectual property issues on this and that we need to be going into any kind of discussions with that full recognition. But these climate hubs, the opportunity is there to really use that as a focal point in a region to bring the communities together. Each regional hub leadership has been reaching out to the tribal members within that region either through on-site visits bringing in; using institutions that exist already in place to do outreach; as well as going and making presentations, webinars and things of that nature. If you have not had a chance to meet your regional climate hub lead or have somebody reach out to them, the list is in the back of that sheet of paper.

The other new effort is a focus on pollinator health, both native pollinators and honeybees. We're very concerned about the decline of honeybees because without the honeybees, so goes agriculture. A new pollinator health initiative that actually was established by our president, by a presidential memo, to charge all of government to address the issues associated with pollinator health. We're very privileged that USDA is one of the co-chairs of that activity, valuing agricultural production, as well as the importance of our native pollinators for our range lands and forest lands. It's a very exciting area, and I'm happy to talk more about that in the future.

Those were just a few things that I wanted to share with you more generally about what's going on with REE. Now to FRTEP and the questions at hand. I know that there were two recommendations in your letter to the secretary, and I really do appreciate the fact that that is a priority that you've identified as something his attention should be placed on. That in itself was very exciting to see, to raise the visibility, because FRTEP is a small program compared to a lot of the other programs that exist within the USDA or even exist within NIFA. It's one of many programs that we have to enhance capacity building and outreach to the communities through the various programs that we have that deal with cooperative extension. It is a challenge for us, frankly, to be able to grow that program in a way that we think is needed to meet the needs of Indian country. The challenges we have with NIFA programs in general is they are all appropriated by line item, and our ability to move money across line items does not exist. Whatever goes into the FRTEP line in the budget is what it is. Even though we would like to be able to expand and increase the ability to move money or to grow that program, it's just constrained by the resources that we are given. Given that that's the situation, of course there are a few options. One is to grow the program, and that requires all of you to be communicating how important FRTEP is. We think it is very well

positioned with the FRTEP educators to help tribal communities increase the health, address healthier communities, more food secure, better and more profitable entrepreneurs, help rebuild tribal traditions, and really to reach the youth that exist in those communities. How we can do it using those resources is something that we are continuously challenged with. Tim can explain and talk to that quite a bit more.

Where we have proven strengths, and I think these are areas where we really need to talk up more what we can do, is with tribal youth and 4-H. Again, the successes we've had at reaching at-risk youth to stabilizing communities to be able to address some of the situations with youth in tribal lands has been a success, and it's just one metric that I think we can grow. Our farmer and rancher outreach, helping tribal producers to be more economically successful, there's proven track record on that. That's again something I think that we can continue to point to as we build rural economies and help support rural economies.

And then also in communities, providing outreach programs to safeguard water supplies, to address traditional foods and traditional knowledge, to build or to provide certification for pesticide users. Those are things that have real tangible benefits. And I think that's again something that we should be pointing to as the success of FRTEP.

Given all of the potential and that which exist, just a span of control, the span of action that could happen across all of tribal lands, the question is how do we stretch that budget which is very thin? How do we expand those FRTEP educators in ways that can really meet your needs? I think you've addressed one point which is to grow the program, which means getting more resources which really is getting to Congress and letting them know how important that is. It's something that your voices are -- we can speak all we want here in Washington D.C., but it is those voices that carry the weight, who are coming from the field, coming from the locations that can carry even more weight.

I think we also need to have you explain - whatever and whoever is in the community - the value that you get from these programs; that it has done things. It has turned around kids so that they are healthier. It is improving the health quality and the food security of tribal lands. This is something that you have to speak to even as we try to give these success stories. I think that's a very important collaboration between REE and USDA and the tribal communities, and I think continue to encourage us to look at different models.

As you acknowledged in your letter, we are looking at some things that might be able to change within the given authority of NIFA. We've already missed one Farm Bill in terms of trying

to change the language associated with FRTEP, but that's another longer term strategy, to expand the capacity of FRTEP, to authorize it at a higher level. Using the next Farm Bill would be one mechanism to do it. That's not a heavy lift. It's actually one line that needs to be changed, but we would like to have you work with us and have you tell us what is most important, so that we can actually use our instruments to be able to get there.

Again, it's increasing the visibility and telling the stories about the successes. We can do some of that and we will do some of that, but we also need your voices to bring that forward. I think this committee is a really good place to be able to continue to ask us how do we improve FRTEP; how do we improve extension; and how do we bring FRTEP educators into the community to do these very important jobs with our youth, with our communities, and with building that stability that we're all looking for?

So that's my thoughts. I think right now what I want to hear from you as well as Tim wants to hear from you, in terms of what your thoughts or further thinking might be on FRTEP or actually really anything that might be in the portfolio that I have interest in. I will leave it at that. Thank you very much for giving me the time.

Mark Wadsworth: Ann, if you would, for our information, this is the way that I understand that the funding goes through to get to the reservations. We do have an extension program on my tribe. Is that you actually have that funding going through the land-grant institution within the state?

Ann Bartuska: That's correct.

Mark Wadsworth: And then the state or that college basically pays the wage of the individual extension agent. I'm just trying to understand the money flow situation here.

Ann Bartuska: Right. It goes through the 1862 land-grant universities. Correct, Tim?

Tim Grosser: Yeah, it does.

Ann Bartuska: Would you mind if Tim came to the table?

Mark Wadsworth: Tim, you can have --

Ann Bartuska: Because these are the details where he lives with this every day. But that is one of the institutional arrangements. But if you could maybe walk through with it, from the appropriation and how does that actually get to the FRTEP educator.

Tim Grosser: Excellent question and we'll try and answer that. Congress appropriates the money which comes into NIFA, \$3 million annually, roughly. NIFA then, it comes in, in such a way that NIFA has to put it out as a competitive grant. So the 1862 institutions - and your state is?

Mark Wadsworth: Idaho.

Tim Grosser: Idaho will apply to that grant program for their annual FRTEP funding. There are 36 FRTEP projects throughout Indian country, serving 76 tribes. So the coverage is about 10 to 13 percent of Indian country being served. NIFA will award a grant to a project - Coeur d'Alene, Fort Hall - for specific work that an agent will do. The institution gets the money or authorization for the money. They hire an educator in most cases to actually do the work. That educator becomes a part of the state extension service just as other extension agents would do in the state of Idaho. So they're a member of that extension service, but paid for out of the FRTEP program. They're on what they call soft money. It is annually granted out. That agent will then conduct the year's activities for farmers and ranchers or for 4-H and youth development as they had outlined in their application.

The project pays the salary - usually it's the full salary - travel money, program money and so on. The tribe then, whatever the federally recognized tribe is in Idaho, it will be asked to contribute - if they can - either an office space or vehicle or whatever they can provide a resource to help support those education programs on their reservation or within their tribal boundary. It's not a money transfer beyond the institution. It pays for activities. It pays for salary. That money then gets

transferred from NIFA to the institution. There's no overhead on this money, so the institution doesn't gain any indirect costs to support this, which is I think an important piece. Whatever administrative activities they're doing to support this is done through their own resources.

Tribes have been very generous in supporting these educators. Once they see the kind of value on the ground that's happening - I can talk about the Fort Hall director there -- they will then say, this is a value to us and so we will provide this, we will provide that - usually in-kind resources, oftentimes though it is money - around these education programs.

These agents also, which is I think very valuable, can apply to other grant programs or other organizations to supplement what they do. If they want to do financial family planning, they can get a grant and then they can even hire additional people in that office to do additional outreach. So FRTEP becomes a platform upon which developmental education to communities and to tribes is conducted. The program sets up the office, but they can begin to connect resources together to actually address need within particular communities.

Mark Wadsworth: On that grant application, are they applying through the land-grant institution or are they applying through the tribe?

Tim Grosser: The authorization from Congress says the money has to go to an 1862 institution. The institution actually submits the application to NIFA and the contract is between NIFA and the 1862. Other than letters of support and providing resources, the tribe is not actually involved in the grant mechanism. They are involved at the programmatic level. So it's institution to NIFA is how the grant is actually conducted.

Mark Wadsworth: I guess I didn't say this correctly when you were looking, our extension agents have the ability to look for other alternative funding to assist with the education of agriculture on individual tribes. If that individual agent writes a grant proposal, is that going to go through the land-grant institution or can it go through the tribe?

Tim Grosser: Excellent question. I believe it could go through the tribe. Whatever organization they're applying to, let's say it's the Indian Land Tenure Foundation or First Nations Development, whatever their restrictions are, they would have to abide by. What happens oftentimes is tribes are eligible for some of these grant programs, so the agent will work with the tribe to get representatives of the tribe to get the grant to the tribe. That happens quite frequently and they're encouraged to do that. That is part of what they're doing, bringing resources in to address need within communities. So it depends on the grant.

Mark Wadsworth: Mary Thompson.

Mary Thompson: Thank you. And thank you, Tim and Ma'am Bartuska.

Ann Bartuska: You may call me Ann.

Mary Thompson: I have always questioned this competitive funding for our FRTEP agents. I understand how it works. If Congress appropriates, then the only way to change that would be to get the language in the Farm Bill.

Ann Bartuska: Correct.

Mary Thompson: I understand what a challenge that is. For tribes, and this is just more personal thought, a lot of times with tribes, their priorities have and continued to be housing and education and healthcare and these types of things. While agriculture is so important to us and close to our heart and with our tribal leaders too, it is not way up at the top of their priority list so we don't get a lot of support in changing Farm Bill language. I guess that's part of our job, to educate our leaders.

I'll give you a little success story about our FRTEP agent. We recently had the agricultural USDA outreach fair. This was back in September 11 in which we invited our county USDA programs, rural development, FSA, the county agents to come in with the tribal programs that we had there, Sequoia fund for entrepreneurs and youth businesses and this type of thing, the

foundations, some of the tribal programs, some of the county programs, and some of the state programs to come over and inform us about the resources that was available. It was a good program and it was very well attended.

But it was a FRTEP agent that helped pull all this together and get all this done. For the FRTEP agent to have to - they stay so busy all the time. I'm sure all of them do. They stay so busy all the time doing projects and everything, that to take the time out of their busy schedule to reapply for their positions through grant applications, I just wish there was a way that we could ease that little burden on them that they don't have to sit and even on their own time to finish up grant applications to have a job again next year. Is there any way, anything, that we could work out with other cooperative extension agents right there from the same land-grant university to assist?

Ann Bartuska: To assist in having the grants developed?

Mary Thompson: I know that she takes more time or it has to take a lot of time and effort just writing the grant application when it's a busy time of the year for the tribe in general when they have things going at the end of fiscal year and it takes away from other programs and projects. I guess the bottom line is we need to get that language changed in the Farm Bill, right,

in order for a FRTEP agent not have to reapply through a grant application for their funding.

Ann Bartuska: I think you've hit a very important -- first let me answer that. Yes, other extension agents within an institution can work cooperatively with FRTEP agents to help develop grant proposals. I think that's a person-to-person activity. But really the big issue is how FRTEP is authorized to function. The whole competitive process is challenging because it doesn't necessarily maintain stability from grant to grant the application for the agent. So a new model I think is something that's needed. We've been talking about this as long as I've been in this job and maybe even longer.

I think we see the weaknesses of this particular approach for what we want to accomplish and the stability of FRTEP extension and how we actually could approach that. I think that's something that maybe we can work together on to actually start crafting what would be authorizing language that would make sense and how do we bring that in to the Farm Bill?

I guess part of the messaging too is the Farm Bill is known [sounds like] only about agriculture because, as you know, there's the rural development aspects, there's rural electrification and rural housing. There is the whole issue of renewable energy. We have so many different ways to get to communities that are not focused strictly on agricultural

production, and that's what the Farm Bill enables us to do. I think if we can think through - and I know Tim and NIFA staff, as well as many FRTEP folks have really thought through - what do we need to do to provide a solid, stable program with the resources that we need to go beyond where our current footprint is, because there's a whole lot more needs out there in Indian country than what we're able to reach as you know?

Now I will say that some 1862 land-grant universities do go beyond FRTEP to actually have the other extension agents working on tribal lands. The one in Arizona is the one I guess I think of the most, but that's another avenue, is working with the land-grants to increase their capacity to address needs on tribal lands. Again, I think this council would be a very powerful way to work with the USDA to actually help address that kind of language.

Mary Thompson: Thank you.

Ann Bartuska: Tim, I'm sorry. Did I cut you off?

Tim Grosser: You pointed out a glaring weakness in the program. Certainly there's congressional change that could happen. NIFA probably could do more to make it a little more flexible. But an example that's happening out in the states like Arizona and Washington State is the extension service. The state of Washington has said Indian country is important to us. And so what they have done is they have 39 counties where they do

extension. So they have just declared, the 1862, the Indian country as their 40th county and they've hired extension staff out of the state extension funds to be that Indian country extension county wherever Indian country exists within that state. They're pulling in 1994 extension office and they're pulling in their two FRTEP projects to do the outreach.

So the 1862 has taken a progressive approach for doing extension outreach within that state using those three different programs to come together to address all of Indian country in Washington State. They're doing a little bit of that in North Carolina with the 1890 actually, and that's a good sign, but that model will provide some more flexibility where now you have staff in a county office who can do the application work and the outreach work for resources, and let the educators go out into the communities and actually educate and determine the need. There is some hope for this, but it will take some higher level attention on this to make these flexibilities appear.

Mary Thompson: Without putting you on the spot --

Tim Grosser: Well, go ahead.

Mary Thompson: -- would you have any suggestions or have you seen any examples of a language or other ideas that NIFA could do to support FRTEP agents to ease the whole bureaucracy of reapplying for their positions to the grant process.

Tim Grosser: We're working on that. We do have some ideas. We do have some language. As Ann had mentioned earlier, it is a small program in the larger grant sea that we deal with, so getting attention sometimes is a challenge. But there are some things that we can do that we hope to press forward, but they have to be done within the larger context of what NIFA is dealing with. That is probably our challenge and we're working on it. This is an important program. Every time USDA folks go out into Indian country or around Indian country, FRTEP agents are there. They see them and they're getting input on how critical this is to the future of Indian country. So we've heard it and we're working on it. It's turning the machinery that is the challenge. Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: Tim, we still have Sarah Vogel.

Sarah Vogel: I wanted to see if I could get one issue clarified, and then I want to explore a second issue. As I understand, the annual \$3 million is capped. I think you said that there are now 36 FRTEP agents.

Tim Grosser: FRTEP projects.

Sarah Vogel: FRTEP projects. So if for example next year an additional 10 projects were proposed by areas or reservations that don't have a FRTEP agent but would like one, then they are competing with the 36, so everybody will get less if more people are successful.

Ann Bartuska: That's correct.

Sarah Vogel: So it's pretty hard to develop a movement. If I were one of the 36, I'd say, "I hope nobody else gets one." It does seem like that language needs to be fixed at the congressional level.

Ann Bartuska: That's where the authorization -- an increase in the authorization beyond the 3 million and then getting the appropriation. There are the two steps, right?

Sarah Vogel: Right.

Ann Bartuska: But yes, that's exactly right. It is something that's under-resourced for the scope.

Sarah Vogel: Maybe this is not the topic at this time, but does one approach the Senate Indian Affairs Committee? Does one approach the appropriations? Do you approach the Agriculture Committee? I mean the leadership on the Hill. What do you do? I'm asking you guys and maybe you can't answer that, but what do you do? I mean you said we need to work together, but --

Ann Bartuska: Our principal committees are Agriculture, for Authorization and Appropriations, for appropriations. However, having said that, there's no question that other committees that have an interest can from peer to peer communicate desires to the principal committee. If Indian Affairs had a strong interest in seeing something like this be improved and the language be changed and would communicate that to Agriculture,

then that creates a dialogue across committees. But our principal committee is the Agriculture Committee for authorization.

The other is Natural Resources. The Farm Bill really is an Ag Committee thing but certainly from Forest Service standpoint and Natural Resource Conservation Service. Principally Forest Service, it's through the Natural Resources committees that have influence. That's another mechanism for the communication of what's important.

Sarah Vogel: But the FRTEP would be primarily Ag.

Ann Bartuska: Agriculture, uh-huh.

Sarah Vogel: I'm getting together tomorrow with Heidi Heitkamp. Is that an angle? Is there a champion for this program on the Hill?

Ann Bartuska: I'm not sure who that is.

Sarah Vogel: Senator Heitkamp.

Ann Bartuska: Oh, I'm sorry.

Sarah Vogel: In North Dakota, we just go by first names.

Ann Bartuska: Well, yes. Of course talking to your members of Congress is certainly important. That's a critical vehicle. You are the constituents. That's the thing that is something that they do recognize. So anyway, yes.

Sarah Vogel: Is there a champion for FRTEP on the Hill?

Ann Bartuska: Tim is shaking his head and he has been in this for a lot longer than I have.

Tim Grosser: Not to my knowledge. Because it's dispersed amongst the states and on grant money, there hasn't appeared to my knowledge a congressional champion for this.

Sarah Vogel: But Senator Tester, as a farmer himself, would get this.

Tim Grosser: Yes, I would agree with you.

Sarah Vogel: Okay, that was my first question.

Chris Beyerhelm: Mr. Chairman, if Ms. Vogel would just yield so I could follow up on this question before you move to your next subject.

Sarah Vogel: Okay. All right.

Chris Beyerhelm: Thank you. I just want to make sure I clearly understand this. The '15 budget is in the can. Agencies have been working on submitting their '16 budget so the President can submit the President's budget. Are you saying that the \$3 million language limits to what you can even ask for on the '16 or '17 budget or do you have the ability to ask for more?

You're just assuming that because the language limits to 3 million, that they might cut it back?

Ann Bartuska: I'm not the expert on this, but my experience is you have a limit in terms of permanence through the authorization. So the authorization, if it's capped to 3

million, it's capped. However, annually Appropriations can insert language to go beyond what's authorized, but it would not stay. So that is another mechanism, but it's really changing the authorization that allows the permanence.

Chris Beyerhelm: I understand. So I guess my bottom line question, and you may not be able to answer this, is like in the '16 budget, how much was requested for funding FRTEP? Maybe you can't say.

Ann Bartuska: I can't say because actually I don't know. I assume we are within generally the same level.

Tim Grosser: Can I say?

Ann Bartuska: Unofficially.

Tim Grosser: NIFA did ask for an increase. It goes up at different levels. I do not know the fate of NIFA's request. It can change as it moves up through up to the president and over to Congress. There can be changes. They look at the bigger picture. And even in the past, in 2010 and '11 or 2011 and '12, NIFA made its request for 8 million per year for FRTEP. That did make it through the President's budget and went to Congress and they allocated 3 million anyway. The requests, while they have risen in the past, they're not an indication that it will - - it gets into the bigger mix. So they have asked for increases in the past and that's where the backend of it, where the advocates and stakeholders really have to come in then. What

will happen if Congress puts more money on FRTEP? Why is that important? That's the message that it has to come through in addition to the request. It comes in from several angles.

Chris Beyerhelm: So the long-term solution is the Farm Bill language, Agricultural Committee. But a short-term solution is the appropriators have the authority to exceed the \$3 million.

Tim Grosser: My understanding is they do.

Male Voice: Thank you.

Ann Bartuska: So Chairman Wadsworth, I unfortunately have to leave. I have another appointment that I need to get to, but I think Tim is available to stay. Are you?

Tim Grosser: Yes, I am.

Ann Bartuska: And he really is the brain trust on this. But I guess the thing I would like to say is that we are very interested in stabilizing FRTEP for the long run, getting to a funding level that makes sense for the program we're delivering. If it means that a small group of you meet with us and work through some language, we are happy to do that. I think following up, it would be great if we got a signal from our secretary that this is something based on your request that he is also interested in. Leslie may be able to help us with that. But we do believe this is an incredible program and it's under-resourced but the value is proven.

And so to the extent we can continue to work together on that, I sincerely would like to help on that. Again, thanks very much for giving me a chance. Sorry, I have to leave. It's a very busy Friday morning. Thanks.

Mark Wadsworth: Thank you, Ann. Any other questions? Yes, Sarah, oh, you had one more.

Sarah Vogel: The other half of my long question. I want to get in a little bit more with this idea of FRTEP as a funding platform, where in addition to the FRTEP money coming from Congress, the FRTEP agent may be able to reach out to other sources. Could foundations give money? If FRTEP is a federal program, then it isn't a nonprofit? Is it a 501(c)(3)? Do they find a partner organization that would work with the FRTEP agent? I know people are creative in terms of seeking grants and getting stuff done, cobbling together things. Tell me how they do it.

Tim Grosser: FRTEP is a grant program like any other federal --

Sarah Vogel: It's a federal grant.

Tim Grosser: -- a federal grant program that goes to a university. It is operated as a state program. It's part of their agriculture and community development extension activities in their state. Historically, Indian Country was not served by extension, and so Congress created this grant program to address the need. The institutions then take that, and it has been

their reach into to Indian country through the FRTEP program. It's growing beyond FRTEP but it's still very slight.

Sarah Vogel: I'm from the state of North Dakota which at the moment ought not need grant dollars. But I'm just trying to visualize how that might work. Say, I'll use South Dakota as an example. In South Dakota --

Tim Grosser: There's three FRTEP projects.

Sarah Vogel: Okay.

Tim Grosser: All run by the South Dakota State.

Sarah Vogel: If they needed extra money, where does that extra money go if they got it?

Tim Grosser: Oftentimes, the extension service gets money and they will supplement that FRTEP agent either with program money or with computers or travel. There's supplemental money that trickles in to the FRTEP office from the state to the land grant. That FRTEP office can then apply either through a tribe, tribal government or just even through the university for additional grant resources that come in for specific purposes. So if it comes through the South Dakota State, they would turn over the money to the FRTEP office for whatever the grant was awarded for. They take overhead if there's overhead allowable. If it comes through the tribe, the tribe will get the money. Then they would work and do whatever it was awarded for.

So they're not 501(c)(3)s. They're state offices in a way, very loosely connected to the land grant and connected to the tribal government because they're operating on tribal land and under the authority or the collaboration with the tribal personnel which is very important. They're positioned to be entrepreneurial.

Now, Mary's point was that because the main person on the grant is also the educator, not in all cases, they're very busy doing educational work. So it's difficult for them to do the grant resource development work. It is extremely difficult. It detracts from the educational part. In some states like Arizona and Montana, the state has the grant authorized person and they simply hire the educators. So they're in a position to handle it much better because they're actually at the university handling. In Arizona, it's seven FRTEP projects; in Montana it's five. They actually have a person who is a FRTEP university-paid-for person. So that's done differently. It's done differently in every state. Like a lot of things, there's no generalization that can describe it.

The one in Oklahoma gets really good funding from their tribe. The tribe gives them money. They want youth programming done. They want county fairs done in Indian country. They get tribal money, and they get as much as they get from the FRTEP project.

That doesn't happen in every state, so it's difficult to pin these things down.

Sarah Vogel: That's very helpful. Thank you.

Tim Grosser: It's complicated.

Mark Wadsworth: Just for my one question here. So they are classified as land-grant institution employees?

Tim Grosser: Yes, and they're actually hired through the land-grant institution. The land grant will put their logo, their stamp on a lot of what they do. They are seen as state even though they're on federal grant money. They are seen as state people.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, Sarah.

Sarah Vogel: Are there any FRTEP agencies within the tribal college system?

Tim Grosser: Another complication. In 1994, when the land grants were created, that meant research, education, and extension; are the three parts to the land grant triad. Then Congress, so then we have new land grants and we want to build up their extension capacity. Almost all the land grants serve Indian country 1994's. So they have a separate grant program for the 1994 institutions to do extension work in Indian country.

In North Dakota, you've got Fort Berthold and you've got the FRTEP in the same location, in the same reservation, the same

town, working together mostly but they're separate programs. One comes through the 1862 - J. Fisher - and the other one comes through the 1994 Fort Berthold. So they may work together, they may not. They may be in different states. So it's another complication. When you're thinking about Indian country extension, you've got this other player, the 1994s.

Sarah Vogel: But the FRTEP does not go to the tribal colleges. It goes to the 1862s.

Tim Grosser: Yes. The 1994 institutions cannot apply for FRTEP money. It was being considered in this past farm bill that they could, which would have made my life interesting, but they took it out. So the 1994 institutions cannot apply for the FRTEP extension money, even though they're all land grant. That's an issue.

Sarah Vogel: The deputy secretary before she left said that she'd welcome working with this council. I think you may get some uptick on that.

Tim Grosser: We would certainly welcome that. It's definitely needed. The two institutions in Indian country that have been very FRTEP-friendly, have been the Intertribal Ag Council and the Indian Land Tenure Foundation have also been very active. IAC has helped create it back in 1990. They're very interested as well in this particular program.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, Leslie.

Leslie Wheelock: Two questions. One, what is the name of the 1994 extension program, do you know?

Tim Grosser: The 1994 Extension Program.

Leslie Wheelock: Is that what it's called? I thought it got a different name.

Tim Grosser: Yes, it is.

Leslie Wheelock: My other question that would probably help inform everybody is whether there is a map or a publication that tells us where the FRTEPs currently are located. So that we have an idea where they are and where they are not and we could prepare that with our 1994 map and see if we can figure out the coverage.

Tim Grosser: Absolutely. I'll provide that. To your office?

Leslie Wheelock: That would be fine. Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, Mary.

Mary Thompson: I want to follow up on the idea that Ann mentioned about working with a small committee to develop language. I'm glad you mentioned that, Sarah. So we'll ask Tim, Leslie, and John that we follow up on that and see what we can get worked out. Thank you.

Tim Grosser: We can provide language for you.

Mary Thompson: Okay.

Male Voice: We'll take it.

Mark Wadsworth: Thank you, Tim.

Tim Grosser: Thank you. It's a pleasure to be here and an honor. I appreciate your time and your interest in the FRTEP program. Thanks again.

John Lowery: Mr. Chairman, I just want to say with Tim, he is our point of contact for all things NIFA. He's another one of those individuals who we count on a lot within our office. Whenever we have a question around anything regarding NIFA, we always go to Tim. Even those subject areas that he's not an expert in, he definitely gets us the right person. So we definitely appreciate having Tim over at NIFA. He's also in the office about 6:00 AM every morning. I usually get emails about 6:15, so I know he's on the job.

Mark Wadsworth: John, for my benefit and probably the record, NIFA stands for --

John Lowery: NIFA is the National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

Mark Wadsworth: Thank you.

Tim Grosser: It's an agency within USDA like rural development and like forest service. It's a small one.

Mark Wadsworth: Again, we'll carry on to the Office of Tribal Relations' update. Leslie has some other information for us.

Leslie Wheelock: I need one of each of those. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. John's going to come around with some information that I wanted to share with the council. I'm not sure how much

time we have. I was looking for my schedule. I pulled it out of my notebook, but we have, what, about 15 minutes?

There are a couple of things that I wanted to follow up on. One is we have started trying to send out a monthly report of what happens in the Office of Tribal Relations each month. There were monthly reports being done when I arrived. It fell apart, nobody wanted them. The secretary's office came back and said, "What happened to your monthly reports?" I tried to make them every other month and that didn't work for us. So we're back to monthly reports as of three or four months ago.

What we do at the end of every month is to write a summary of the activities that have taken place in the office at a fairly high level during the month for the secretary. He uses that, in some respects, to try to keep track of us; in some respects, to ensure that he knows where we're going. We try to let him know what's happening in our office and what things are coming up, so that he is aware of those things whether or not he can join us or get to them or whatever. It's kind of another point. We then take that report and reformat it slightly and send it out so that you all have it and can see what we've been doing. I've reformatted that report and that didn't make it into your package in time but I wanted you to have it. That's the stapled piece of paper.

Then, the other thing that John sent around, as long as we're talking about what our responsibilities are. With the passage of the 2014 Farm Bill and the language in that Farm Bill that made the Office of Tribal Relations permanent within the office of the secretary, there comes a delegation of responsibilities for the office from the Department of Agriculture to the Office of Tribal Relations. Those delegations were pushed through the Federal Register in July of this year, so I wanted to share them with you.

In addition to what you have in front of you; there's a portion that I didn't bring with you; that indicates that the director of the Office of Tribal Relations, which is the position that I hold, was in addition to what's in front of you, made an officer of the department. I didn't bring that with me, but that's pretty substantial in terms of bringing the Office of Tribal Relations and the focus on tribal relations up to a very high level within the department.

I'm going to read these delegations into the record, as John did with the official delegations. This is Code of Federal Regulations, Title 7, Subtitle A, Part 2, Subpart D, Section 2.38 - Director, Office of Tribal Relations. Delegations: The following delegations of authority are made by the Secretary of Agriculture to the director, Office of Tribal Relations. Item 1: serve as the department's primary point of contact for tribal

issues. Item 2: advise the secretary on policies related to Indian tribes. Item 3: serve as the official with principal responsibility for the implementation of Executive Order 13175, "Consultation and coordination with Indian Tribal Governments," including the provision of department-wide guidance and oversight regarding travel consultation, coordination and collaboration. Item 4: coordinate the department's programs involving assistance to American Indians and Alaska Natives. Item 5: enter into cooperative agreements to improve the coordination and effectiveness of federal programs, services, and actions affecting rural areas (7 U.S.C. 2204b(b)(4)); to provide outreach and technical assistance to socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers and veteran farmers and ranchers (7 U.S.C. 2279(a)(3)). Item B is reserved, so I don't know what they're going to put in there, but that could be fun. One of the things that comes out of this, that this makes apparent is that tribal organizations and tribal citizens are included in a grouping called socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, that we see and called out in many of our programs, there are set-asides for those groups. There are special programs for those designated peoples. They call them that. The addition that's cool in here is veteran farmers and ranchers. Veterans with the 2014 Farm Bill along with tribes, veterans became a word that has popped up throughout the 2014

Farm Bill. There are set-asides for our veterans coming back in. You may have overheard in the discussion yesterday about veterans. Some of those sections talk about beginning veterans, or beginning farmers and ranchers. Depending on the whims of Congress in the section that they were writing at the time, a beginner, a beginning veteran or a beginning farmer or rancher that can be beginning in the last 10 years. It's a rather significant change and addition to the Farm Bill that we are delighted to see. And we are looking forward to promoting, especially as our veterans come home and hopefully come home to spaces where they either want to start up a farm or a ranch or want to take over their family's farm or ranch. Now have assistance from USDA in doing that.

In addition to these two items, I wanted to give you a brief update on the activities of the White House Council on Native American Affairs. This was a council that was started by the president last year, established by the president. Secretary Sally Jewell is the chair of the White House Council for Native American Affairs. Secretary Vilsack, as the chair of the White House Rural Council, is heavily relied upon to support the Native American Affairs Council as a lot of people within the federal government are learning there's a very large overlap there, in that the USDA provides a substantial amount of programming technical assistance that tribes are eligible for.

We're seeing more and more tribes taking advantage of those programs and winning the grants and getting the technical assistance that they desire.

Within the White House Council for Native American Affairs, there are special interest areas. We have working subgroups around the Beltway depending on the topic that deal with climate change, energy, education, sacred sites which was established prior to the White House Council coming into being, economic development which started up two days ago. What am I missing, John? I'm missing one.

To give you an example of energy. Energy is co-chaired by the Department of Interior and the Department of Energy tribal liaisons, the person in my role in those two organizations. In Interior, sometimes it's the same person and sometimes it's different people depending on their expertise. Those are the co-chairs. The other organizations that are wrapped in, there are many of them but they include the Environmental Protection Agency and others, NOAA, and some others that are working in the energy area. Some of that is infrastructure-focused. Some of it is in addition-focused. HUD is also in there because of the need to provide energy to the house.

What we're trying to do is to make it easier for tribes coming in with some of these projects or desires to come into one spot, a one-stop shop, and have the team together that can help the

tribe without the tribe having to go from here over there, over there, over there. Either when they're in town or at different points in the financing or the establishment of what it is they are going to do, some of these projects as we know, especially our water projects, our infrastructure projects, are long-term projects. We have seen tribes just bounce from department to department to department, looking for funding, looking for assistance. We're trying to reduce that.

In addition, we're trying to coordinate budget requests and the results of what we get from appropriations so that we are coordinating Indian country programming better in the federal government. It's not going to be the best we could be because it's provided under all kinds of different authorities to at least 10 different departments, but the focus is on making it better and stronger.

As a result of the president's trip to Standing Rock, North Dakota earlier this summer, we have - because he took the First Lady with him - a highly elevated and increased focus on tribal youth which results in a big focus on Bureau of Indian Education schools, both the programming of those schools and the planning and the way that the students are taught in those schools, as well as the schools' infrastructure.

In USDA, we have rural development providing all kinds of funding for community facilities, schools, and infrastructure,

but we cannot fund renovation or new building of BIE schools because they are federal facilities. We cannot use money appropriated to one government organization to pay for something owned by another U.S. government organization. So we have this problem that, I think, Secretary Washburn would just like to have the money moved from USDA over to him, but we have a lot of other communities that we serve. That money, they've got to find it from somewhere in order to get that work done.

Focus on education, focus on workforce development and economic development - I'm missing one of my focal points - youth. So what you are likely to see and hear over the next three months coming out of the White House and out of our organizations are additional programs, additional focus, additional stories about what's happening in those areas - tribal education, youth.

There's a little bit of infrastructure but it's primarily part of economic development. Out of that comes workforce development.

I think I'll stop there. Am I missing something? John and I attend so many meetings. There are days when we get to our office at about 5:00 in the evening. We're hoping to have some more staff join us soon. At that point, we'll be busting our budget and we'll be slowing down on our travel a bit as a result. Thank you.

John Lowery: Did you hit on the OMB meeting you had recently?

Leslie Wheelock: I did, but I didn't talk about it in detail. One of the interesting things that came up a couple of weeks ago, we were asked to come in and talk about our budget request for fiscal year '16, which is the one that was just submitted. We were asked to come in along with five other departments. They wanted specifically to talk about Indian programming, Indian funding, tribal funding. We came in with Interior, HUD, IHS, EPA, us and Education. It's the first time that's been done. It's the first time that those departments were brought together to understand what each other does, to see some of the overlap, to try to figure out or at least to begin the conversation around budgeting and funding. Again, we all have different authorities that we get that funding under. So the idea of combining and blending is difficult, but the idea of collaboration and coordination is easier.

Next week, the White House Council for Native American Affairs will be meeting. That is the cabinet level members plus one, so I attend that meeting and the secretary is planning on attending that meeting. The secretary of Agriculture is planning on attending that meeting. Following that meeting, there's a meeting of the deputy secretary who is Krysta Harden -- has Krysta been here since she was elevated? I don't think she has been. You all need to meet her. She's a wonderful, wonderful person.

John Lowery: She came in as a chief of staff.

Leslie Wheelock: She came as chief of staff before I arrived, but in her new role, she is a huge promoter for the beginning farmer and rancher programs that you're seeing. Sorry?

Female Voice: Which program is she a deputy in?

Leslie Wheelock: She's the deputy secretary of the Department of Agriculture. So when the secretary is out, she's in charge, Krysta Harden. We'll get her over here and talk to you because she's a very cool person with an interesting background that you all can appreciate. She and I will be going to a meeting next week to talk about the fiscal 2015 budget, which is the one that begins October 1st. How all these entities can coordinate and collaborate better to make it easier for Indian country to get what Indian country needs, again, probably focused on youth, education, workforce development, and jobs. That's all I have. Thank you.

Gilbert Harrison: Thank you, Leslie. Gilbert from Navajo.

There's a delegation here. It says socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. That's got to be true because if you're into farming and ranching, you're always broke and you have no time for social events.

What I wanted to ask is maybe somewhere along here, we've got all kinds of tribal liaisons. We've got all kinds of tribal coordinators, federal or not, all these people and organizations

that are supposed to be helping Native American farmers and ranchers and other programs. I'd like to see a list of how many of these officers or people that are designated to help us and in what capacity. You mentioned that you're starting to coordinate this. It would be nice to have a listing because, as they say, when you're with the government, you're there to help, but I'd like to see some of these people that are there to help us.

If we could maybe get a listing of that and maybe throughout our meetings, invite them to come in to let us know what they're coordinating, let us know what they're doing. I think that would be appropriate because otherwise -- to alleviate some of this duplication.

The other question I have is I know within the BIA and Indian Health Service, there's ability to 638 federal programs. Does that apply also to USDA programs? Thank you very much.

Leslie Wheelock: Thank you, Gilbert. We'd be happy to pull together the listing of tribal liaisons. I think it's timely to do that in the USDA because at the headquarters' level, we had liaisons and now we're seeing that more and more of the agencies are appointing more and more tribal liaisons, sometimes one per state. It's becoming more interesting and more difficult for us to keep track of. That's a good ask.

Gilbert Harrison: You mentioned the White House Council or something like that, which implies there are other --

Leslie Wheelock: Right. There are a lot of them. At some point, we've had to cut it off, especially at Interior, quite a few. With regard to the 638 funding, the United States Department of Agriculture does not have 638 authority. So we don't have the ability to do that kind of contracting. What we do have is the ability to look at 638 funding not completely but in part where there is a matching grant requirement or a match requirement for funding. Some of the 638 funding can be used to make up that match.

Gilbert Harrison: Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: Mary, did you --?

Mary Thompson: Thank you. Leslie, this report right here, I mean you guys meet with and coordinate with so many different programs within USDA. So I'm glad to see, but it's only right that they finally put the language in the CFR. So I applaud that.

Leslie Wheelock: Thank you.

Mary Thompson: On some of your upcoming meetings, I was looking at this one, Tribal America at the NCAI meeting in Atlanta. Do they have to do stipends? Who would I get in contact with if I wanted to attend that meeting to apply for maybe a stipend somewhere to pay registration fee or something?

Leslie Wheelock: You mean to attend NCAI?

Mary Thompson: Right.

Leslie Wheelock: I don't know that they do except occasionally for speakers. John, any idea who the best person is to send that request to? John and I have both worked at NCAI so we have this inside knowledge, but that's a tough one.

Mary Thompson: You know the whole time I served in tribal government, I never attended an NCAI meeting, and now I kind of wish I had. I don't know. Maybe I shouldn't say anything but you said either. So just let me not go there.

Leslie Wheelock: Let's think about that. But this one is in Atlanta so it's not that far off.

Mary Thompson: And it's right close to home, but I appreciate this report. You guys stay busy all the time, and you have been coordinating with these programs. I'm so glad to see that. I'm trying to fill in my organizational chart here with names. I might get that to you and have you finish it up. Then the last thing, I guess, is I thought I was getting pretty good with acronyms but if the OTR staff continues to meet with our counterparts at DOI, DOD, DOE and ACHP on MOUs. I got half of them, not all of them. I have a lot to learn. Thank you very much.

Male Voice: The ACHP?

Leslie Wheelock: That's the Advisory Council for Historic Preservation. Mary, the secretary doesn't like them either, so thank you for pointing that out. I probably ought to fix my report.

Mark Wadsworth: Okay. Any other comments? Yes, Gilbert.

Gilbert Harrison: Thank you, Mark. One of the other issues or questions that come to my mind is that, on and off yesterday and today, we talked about the upcoming Farm Bill that's going to be coming around. The last time we got in some discussions late in the game. Maybe that's something that this council can start thinking about what should we include? In the sense you're the key person here, maybe you can think about keeping us informed. Maybe we can generate some language that would be beneficial to the people that we are trying to serve. I think that will be something that I would like to see happen. Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: I guess we'll go into the subcommittee discussion and selections. John, did you want us to go through those comments? How would you like that to proceed on that portion?

John Lowery: What I envision, Mr. Chairman, is going through each of these subcommittees. I want to pass out the report that you guys did for the May 2014 meeting as a review of what was done. The subcommittees have not met since that time because the council was in effect not anymore until the secretary

reapproved the council. I think that with the discussion of each one of these subcommittees, we also need to discuss who's going to be a part of these different subcommittees. We definitely need council support and council buy-in and council being active on these subcommittees, because in the past, we only had three or four people who were actually engaged. We're going to need that. I think this is the time for us just to review, discuss and also for members to say, hey, I want to serve on that council, on that subcommittee. So I'm going to pass out the reports now.

Mark Wadsworth: I'd like to reiterate that, too, as a suggestion. If you're volunteering for these committees, it was difficult for some of the members at times because they were the only player in the room. When we put our name out there as being a part of this, we just need our activity, sticking to our word that we are going to be proactive when you're looking at the committee statute. I, for myself, I apologize, too, because I actually missed the discussion on one of the subsistence. So I'm going to rectify that in the future. We did have a heck of a conversation on the Forest Service and so they are important if we have the right participation.

[Inaudible 1:16:32-1:18:52]

Derrick Lente: I don't know if this needs to be recorded but is there something we can do about the air conditioning in this

room? I think on this side of the table it's freezing cold.  
Unless you let me borrow your jacket, I'm going to have to move.

Mark Wadsworth: I think me and Chris, we need warming up here.

John Lowery: Mr. Chairman, I think it's probably correct to just go down the line and discuss each of the subcommittees in order to have a structured way of doing this without jumping all around. The first subcommittee is the BIA Facilitation Committee. If you look at the report that was provided to you it's the only one I don't have on my desk.

Mark Wadsworth: It's right here.

John Lowery: Yeah, it's the Bureau of Indian Affairs facilitation. The members at the time - we met one time - that was myself, Leslie, and Kathryn. This subcommittee was created because there was a desire by the council to make sure that we have BIA presentation, that whenever issues arose that we had a subcommittee that we could take the issues that we're dealing strictly with the Bureau of Indian Affairs and have the subcommittee be able to deal with those issues. At the time, discussion was held around the need for representative from the Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Office to serve as liaison between the BIA and the council. At each meeting, items are discussed regarding BIA land management and USDA programs, and it was imperative to have someone in the room who can items

back to the BIA for further examination. Kathryn will serve as the BIA liaison to the council.

That was what was discussed during that time period. As you can see, Kathryn is here, and she is representing the assistant secretary's office, a.k.a. the BIA. That was what happened. That's what's going on there. We only met one time before the May meeting. Any discussion around this committee? Anybody wanting to volunteer to serve on this committee? We do have eight committees altogether, so definitely we'd love to have a couple of individuals serving on each committee.

John Collier: Mr. Chairman.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, John.

John Collier: I'll volunteer for the BIA committee.

Mark Wadsworth: Gilbert Harrison.

Gilbert Harrison: Mr. Chair, I would also like to volunteer for that committee. Also a comment. Kathryn, welcome. We hope that we can have a good dialogue with BIA through you because many of the things that we do on reservation trust lands has to do with our partner, the BIA. So welcome and hope that we can have a good dialogue. Thank you.

Sarah Vogel: I'm not volunteering to work on the BIA committee, but I do think that Kathryn deserves her own name card. It would be a sign that she's really joined us and is here for the long term if we make that investment of a name card for her.

John Lowery: I agree with that, and we will get one. She's claimed now, huh?

Derrick Lente: Mr. Chairman, how many volunteers for each committee are you looking for?

Mark Wadsworth: Actually, I think that we've kind of left it up to whoever is interested in each area.

Derrick Lente: That being said, I volunteer myself for this committee.

Mark Wadsworth: John, you're taking that list there?

John Lowery: Yes, sir. Yes, sir.

Mark Wadsworth: Just off the cuff here a little bit, but, Kathryn, could you give us an idea of what your experience has been since we've started this with BIA and stuff? She needs a microphone.

Kathryn Isom-Clause: Thank you for inviting me here. This is actually the first council meeting where I've been able to attend the entire time, so I really appreciate your welcoming me here for this entire time to listen to all the concerns. I've been hearing bits here and there, and I know our Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Larry Roberts also attended a full council meeting in Las Vegas. So please feel free if you have concerns or any ideas on what you would like my role here to be, but I'm looking at my role as just to be a liaison. I'm not necessarily a technical expert on the issues in terms of farming

and ranching, but I'm very happy to take questions back to elevate issues to leadership, that type of thing.

I think one thing that might be helpful when you have various speakers come in like you have this meeting is I can help bring people in from BIA who are the technical experts and can answer the questions about the leasing and that type of thing.

Male Voice: Yeah, that would be a good deal.

Kathryn Isom-Clause: Yeah, we can definitely work together. As a followup, I email John and Leslie on that. I do work with them quite a bit on a variety of issues, and they're great. If there are other issues that come up even outside of the council with the BIA to help facilitate meetings, I can be on that too. That's generally my role, is to be a point of contact, so feel free to reach out to me. I have cards here today, and I think maybe John can distribute my contact information as well.

Mark Wadsworth: Thank you, Kathryn.

Gilbert Harrison: Mark, maybe you can take this message back out in the field. I come from the Navajo area. We have a very large area. We have many individual grazing permits, land use permits, and farm permits. Some of them are in various stages of termination. Some are in various stages of transfer from one party to another. But because we are lacking field staff, these things just pile up. Since the Bureau is still, quote, in charge, we still need the secretary's signature on these

actions. Things just pile up, so we need help to move these documents along; otherwise, things just get suspended and nothing moves. That's one thing I would like to have you take back on behalf of Navajo. Anyway, I imagine we're experiencing that everywhere else. Thank you.

Kathryn Isom-Clause: Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: With that, I think we'll go on to the next committee, John.

John Lowery: The next subcommittee was the Conservation Subcommittee, if you can find that paper. Members include Angela Peter, Gerald Lunak who is no longer with the council, Chris Beyerhelm, Reid Strong. Reid Strong is the guy who sits in on behalf of Dr. Joe Leonard. So issues discussed during our meeting, I think we met twice, discussion was held around the inclusion of the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program, also known as WHIP, within the Environmental Quality Incentive Program, also known as EQIP. With the passing of the new Farm Bill, individuals will be able to sign up for WHIP-like programs by using EQIP. Funds normally set aside for WHIP had been included in the EQIP program.

Going on down, discussions also held around on what can be done to alleviate cost of EQIP program, related cost regarding standard specification practices set by the Natural Resources Conservation Services. This committee did have one

recommendation, and they encourage all USDA programs to adopt a micro project philosophy. This is based off of the Forest Service Agency developing a microloan program internally and using it. For example, in the middle here, a fairly routine conservation price, minimal financial impact less than 10,000 becomes significantly increased financial impact when NRCS engineering specifications are applied.

In other words, we were trying to find ways and we're trying to encourage other agencies to look at ways of providing microloans, smaller loans available for producers who may not be in -- they don't need a large loan. They don't need that because that's not what they are needing on their property. But for a lot of our programs, unless you are getting \$30,000, \$40,000, \$50,000, \$100,000 loans, you can't get a loan. What FSA did was they led the charge, and I think it's what now, Chris, up to 25,000 is your microloan program?

Chris Beyerhelm: There's a Federal Register that's coming out in two weeks that move it to 50,000.

John Lowery: So that allows individuals who are looking for smaller loans the opportunity to get their smaller loans. So what those guys have done, we are definitely encouraging NRCS and other programs to do the same thing. So to look at how to provide opportunities for individuals to access lower amount of funding, we're all having to take on the huge repayment of a

high-cost loan. So that's what we did. This was put in to the recommendations to the secretary. Currently, we are looking for members to serve. Are there any questions? Anybody want to discuss further? Anybody interested in serving?

Sarah Vogel: I'm not volunteering to serve on this committee. But I thought when you were talking about this microloan, we have this fabulous data from the Census of Agriculture which shows the sharp differences between many Native American farmers and ranchers and other ranchers in terms of the acreage, the dollars amount and so on. So I think if that committee took the data from the Census of Agriculture and said 53 percent of all Native American farmers and ranchers have less than whatever; and if you have only the macro projects, it's noneconomic for a very small operator to do great big paperwork as Gilbert brings up all the time. I think there's a real opportunity because it's very compelling to have those statistics and those numbers.

Mary Thompson: I am volunteering for this committee. But sometimes I look at some of these things and if the engineering standards are an issue on small projects like that, it makes me wonder and go back to whether it's a regulatory law or if it's an internal department policy and what the policy says in D.C., or in the manual, or in the handbook. Sometimes these can be addressed. I think it's a good recommendation and something that needs to be followed through with on these particular

programs. This one was NRCS, and it made things more workable within Indian country.

Mark Wadsworth: Affordable.

Mary Thompson: Affordable projects in Indian country. Leslie, since the -- wait a minute, I'm getting my acronyms right. If the Office of Tribal Relations, OTR, now mandated or in the Federal Register work with these programs, I think that's one issue that should be brought up again to reinforce and get that changed. Thank you.

Male Voice: Mr. Chairman, I would also like to volunteer to continue to serve on this committee.

Mark Wadsworth: Derrick.

Derrick Lente: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Derrick Lente, Sandia Pueblo. I'd like to nominate Mary for this committee, Ms. Vogel.

Mark Wadsworth: Mary?

Derrick Lente: I mean Sarah. I'm just kidding. I didn't like to volunteer her for that committee. I think though that this committee is very specific to where I come from, in the small farms. Back where I come from, if you have about five acres of land that you can cultivate, then you're doing okay. I think for someone to actually go out and make something of that five acres is a big deal for anyone - young farmer, old farmer, whatever. I think just to get off the ground is an important

aspect of that, whether it needs to be laser leveled or DIG implemented or the aspect of perhaps even buying some equipment for that. But I think it's important that this type of program exists, and I too would nominate or I'd like to volunteer myself and my time to this committee. Thank you.

Male Voice: Chris, did you say the microloan was up to 50,000?

Chris Beyerhelm: Yeah. The secretary was given the discretion to raise it, so the proposal on the Federal Register would be to raise it to 50,000.

Male Voice: You just keep trying to do a good job, don't you?

Chris Beyerhelm: Got to keep with you two guys, you know.

John Lowery: Is there anyone else who wants to serve on this committee?

Male Voice: I would like to volunteer too, but I'd also like to say Conservation and Climate Change.

Mark Wadsworth: I believe that is really going to be a hot button issue.

John Lowery: Does anyone have any discussion around adding Climate Change to this committee? I mean Conservation/Climate Change Subcommittee.

Mary Thompson: I would make that move, Mr. Chairman. Mary Thompson.

Sarah Vogel: Sarah Vogel, second.

Mark Wadsworth: It's been moved and seconded to change the Committee of Conservation to Conservation/Climate Change Committee. Any discussion? Yes, Gilbert.

Gilbert Harrison: Thank you, Mark. I'm wondering when we talk about climate change, what are we talking about? Climate change is going to happen, but what are we going to talk about? What do we mean when we say climate change? I guess maybe I'd like to have a little bit clarification on that. What should our role be as far as do we advise or do we just discuss and cuss? What do we do? Thank you very much.

Mark Wadsworth: John Berrey first.

John Berrey: Thank you. I think the climate change, we're talking about how it affects Native American farmers and ranchers. I think there's an abundant amount of data that's being created right now that shows that there are some effects. There's a drought in the west, the flooding, and the effects it's having on the Alaskan population. I think that's the gist of it, is how these changes we're experiencing with our climate on reserve and how it affects native people in farming and ranching, and how we work with the USDA to see if there are ways that we could use their vast expertise in providing alternatives for the people mostly affected.

Chris Beyerhelm: John just hit the nail on the head. USDA is -  
- I don't know if we're completely done, but we're certainly

developing a strategic plan for climate change. It mostly has to do with not just education, but as we work with producers, educating them about potential impacts of climate change but then also talking about whether or not we should change programs to try to help producers adapt to climate change. So in some ways, climate change is an overarching theme of all of these subcommittees. It doesn't mean it shouldn't be a separate piece of this. But to answer your question, Gilbert, I think how the community can help USDA recognize changes that needed to be made in programs to at least give producers opportunity to try to mitigate that if they choose to. I think that's primarily the focus the committee could have.

Gilbert Harrison: Thank you.

Chris Beyerhelm: Mr. Chairman, I would caution us to not use the term global warming though and to stay with climate change because that tends to be a lightning rod.

Mark Wadsworth: I guess there's still a motion on the floor, so any further discussion? Okay, it's been moved and seconded.

Call to question. All of those in favor of the motion on the floor, say aye.

All: Aye.

Mark Wadsworth: Any opposed? Motion passes.

John Lowery: Mr. Chairman, the next one is the Council Governance and Structure Subcommittee. The members of this

committee who volunteered to serve were Gilbert Harrison and Angela Peter. Issues discussed: Discussions essentially need to be more dignified during council business, possibly using Robert's Rules of Order when discussing motions and the creation of the recording secretary position on the council to set up recommendations. Let me say this. The Council on Governance and Structure and also the Responding to Concerns and Recommendations, those were two subcommittees created by you guys to be more of just how the council itself deals, works and completes work. I don't think that they were designed to be committees to actually do recommendations to the secretary. With that being said, these are the recommendations that were discussed regarding the way that the council works: The need for a dignified approach when conducting business. Members should not talk out of turn. Always introduce yourself when speaking. Remember that minutes are being recorded and the general public will have access to the verbatim minutes. Members should always treat meetings in a professional manner. The chair should remind individuals at the beginning of the meetings and during if needed to be respectful to each other and the time allotted. It is recommended that for business to be better conducted, Robert's Rules of Orders should be followed when motions are brought to the floor for debate and vote. It's also recommended that DFO should pull together the parts of Robert's Rules that

deal with motions and provide in councilmembers' packet.

Discussed designating a recording secretary within the CNAFR to record all motions in order to eliminate confusion. It's a normal exercise with councils and boards to have one person to record motions made and recommendations passed. The recording secretary position will also conduct roll call and provide a list of those present and absent, and discuss having DFO write a letter to distribute in the packets before each meeting, saying hello and describing what exactly the council was created to do and focusing on importance of attendance at these meetings.

With regard to these recommendations, pretty much there's only one that wasn't followed up on and that was pulling the Robert's Rules of Order and getting that information and putting it in your packets. So that's something that I will do and have that for you guys at your next meeting.

Are there any individuals who want to serve on this committee? I would like also to just put out there that I think personally as a DFO that combining this committee along with the Responding to Concerns and Recommendation should be that both of these committees should be brought together. I've said that in the past and you guys told me no, so I went in the corner and was quiet. I want to once again bring it up, but I think that's something that could probably be discussed as we get down into the Responding to Concerns and Recommendations and then see if

any of you guys do want to bring those two committees together.  
So just a thought.

Chris Beyerhelm: Thanks, John, because actually, I was going to comment about whether or not I really felt that this committee was needed anymore. I mean the things I see on here are perhaps slight corrections to the way we're doing business, but I hope the new members would agree that it seems like we've had some stability and some order to the meeting here. I'm not sure, you know, whether you want to combine it with another committee or not, I would recommend that this committee not continue as a subcommittee.

Mary Thompson: I agree with Chris that you could probably discontinue this and that as chairman of this council that you would control members not talking out of turn. The rest of this is just something that we ourselves should be doing. In the future, I will try to remember this and say my name before I speak and not talk out of turn. Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: So if I'm correct, has there been a motion made and seconded by Mary?

Chris Beyerhelm: I will rephrase my comments. I'll make a motion that this committee be discontinued, perhaps adding some of the pieces of it to another committee, but this can itself be discontinued.

Male Voice: I second.

Mark Wadsworth: Okay, it's been moved and seconded. Any further discussion? If not, we'll vote on the motion. All of those in favor, say aye.

All: Aye.

Mark Wadsworth: Any opposed? Motion passes.

John Lowery: The next committee was the Credit and Credit Desert Subcommittee. I'm going to touch on this the same way that I've touched on the others. Sarah and Chris, I know that you two were highly involved so if I miss something here or if you want to include something, please feel free to do that. This committee was a very active committee. It included members within the council and also members outside of USDA, which is allowed. We were able to have members outside of the USDA and also outside of federal family to participate in subcommittees. That is not a problem. According to FACA, those individuals have to be approved by the DFO and we have no problems with these individuals. So Zach Ducheneaux from IAC, Sarah Vogel, Elsie Meeks, Chris Beyerhelm, William Reid Strong, Dorothy Bridges, Dick Todd, Susan Woodrow, Mike Hinton, and also Lisa Sled [phonetic] participated in this.

Issues discussed: Discussed potential solutions and secretary recommendations to resolve credit and banking access in Indian country. In fact, instigating credit deserts were discussed as three-fold: conventional lenders often located in areas of high

population destiny and economic vitality; lending in Indian country often requires interaction with tribal laws and for real estate loans, the Bureau of Indian Affairs; and three, there's a lack of widespread awareness on existing borrowers and lenders in Indian country.

There were six recommendations. I'm not going to read all six, but, you guys, this did come out of the subcommittee and it was part of the recommendation package that the entire council sent to the secretary. At this time, is there any discussion about this subcommittee and are there individuals who would like to serve on this subcommittee?

Sarah Vogel: I would like to serve on this subcommittee. I just wanted to say that I think we probably met at least six times. It was pretty fabulous, the level of support and involvement we got. Dorothy Bridges, for example, is a senior vice president at the Minneapolis Fed and expert on lending in Indian country and the head of Community Reinvestment Act and the person who put together the Economic Development Conference a couple of years ago that the big Fed had here in D.C. She said she would be happy to serve, and she would bring an economist and a lawyer along with her. So we had quite a huge level of participation. Zach, Zach of course with IAC, incredible knowledge. And then Elsie Meeks from Rural Development in South Dakota. So it was pretty fabulous.

Our work is not yet done. We have a lot going on and a lot in process but not yet done. So I'd like to volunteer to keep working on this. I think all the people that we had before and hopefully maybe a few more may want to come along.

Tawney Brunsch: This is Tawney Brunsch from Pine Ridge, South Dakota. I would love to volunteer for this committee because it looks like you've done a lot already, but the potential really is pretty limitless. I think there's a lot of need yet to connect some of the credit issues with some of the outreach that we're doing. All the programs we're talking about, whether it would be for youth, beginning farmer, rancher, whatever, you have to be able to connect that with the access to credit. With Lakota Federal Credit Union, what we're experiencing there as well as Lakota Funds 28 years of experience, I think I can be a valuable piece to this and so I'm anxious to jump on board.

John Lowery: Thank you.

Leslie Wheelock: Mr. Chairman, I would like to join this committee. For everyone's information, one of the recommendations to the secretary was for the secretary to promote economic development across organizational team. As that was raised by the White House in the last week, I volunteered to co-chair across departmental team on economic development. It blends in very well. Thank you.

Sarah Vogel: I also think that perhaps Kathryn, on behalf of the BIA, might want to join. I don't think we knew of Kathryn at the time this committee started work, but now I think it would be a really good idea. We meet by telephone so there won't be any big travel involved. May I volunteer you?

Kathryn Isom-Clause: This is Kathryn. I would be happy to join, thank you.

Chris Beyerhelm: Mr. Chairman, I would also like to volunteer to continue to serve in this committee.

Mark Wadsworth: We have some members that are not here. We'll make sure that they get notified also. Yes, John Berrey.

John Berrey: I just want to volunteer as well.

Mark Wadsworth: I think we can carry on to the next committee.

John Lowery: All right. Moving on to the next one with the Education and Extension Subcommittee. Members of this subcommittee were Alex Porter, Juan Garcia, Lily McFarlane [phonetic], Tim Grosser, Jerry McPeak, Porter Holder, and Gerald Lunak. I'm just going to skip the issues discussed. The potential recommendation is down at the bottom.

These five recommendations were discussed and voted on by the subcommittee and also approved by the full committee and sent to the secretary: allow for 1994 tribal colleges and universities to be eligible for direct extension funding; have the secretary ask the president for further FRTEP funding - FRTEP is Federally

Recognized Tribal Extension Program - waive congressional campaign and requirements for current FRTEP extension agents and created peer review process for new applicants; extend the length of the grants to four to five years rather than one year; call for automated applications for new applications or projects; have a separate funding or expanded funding source for new projects that does not take away from the current FRTEP extension office.

I just want to say these recommendations here are the reason why we had Deputy Under Secretary Ann Bartuska here today. The discussion about this was because of what was done in this Education and Extension Subcommittee. Is there any discussion or would anybody like to volunteer to serve on this committee?

Porter Holder: I'd like to re-volunteer to serve on this committee.

Mark Wadsworth: Is your hand up, Derrick?

Derrick Lente: No.

Mary Thompson: Chairman, are you going to serve on this committee?

Mark Wadsworth: I was looking at probably the next re --

Mary Thompson: Well, I was just asking because you have raised a lot of issues or asked a lot of questions when we were discussing this FRTEP program. With education, Lawrence Shorty did his presentation yesterday and there were a couple of things

that I would like to know a little bit more about I guess and see if there's a way that this committee can assist or help further the goals and the mission of these Indian colleges. What are they called?

Mark Wadsworth: 1994.

Mary Thompson: Yeah, the 1994. So since I need to learn about this stuff, maybe I should just volunteer, right? Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: You talked yourself into it.

Mary Thompson: I talked myself into it.

Sarah Vogel: I think I would like to too. The combination of FRTEP and tribal colleges is pretty cool.

Mark Wadsworth: I would like to also remind people, you know, everybody is free to cross committees if you want to participate in order to learn.

Sarah: Just a quick comment. This is Sarah from the Farm Service Agency here for Val Dolcini. I'm here on behalf of Val Dolcini from the Farm Service Agency. I just wanted to make a note that Juan Garcia is no longer administrator, but I will check with Val to see if he's interested in serving on this committee. I'll also check with Lily McFarlane with her agency. So should I get back to you then, John?

John Lowery: Yes, Sarah.

Sarah: We'll do. Thank you.

Chris Beyerhelm: Mr. Chairman, if I could just reiterate again that Mr. Dolcini sends his regrets. It's his second week on the job. He had these meetings scheduled before he got here. He certainly committed to me to tell the committee that he's committed to this committee and will participate in much greater presence at the next meeting.

Mark Wadsworth: Thank you.

John Lowery: Is there anyone else? All right. Moving along, the next one was Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Subcommittee. The members on that were Mark Wadsworth and Reid Strong. Once again, Reid is the proxy for Dr. Leonard. We had a number of recommendations come out of this subcommittee. I believe we met twice and both times, we had individuals from the Forest Service there to discuss with us. Ralph Giffen, who you all met yesterday, participated. Then there was also a discussion around the BAER funding. We had the individual who is the national program lead for BAER out of New Mexico give us a call as well. So we were able to get a lot done there. The potential recommendations that came out of the subcommittee and that you guys approved were outreach and consultation on the updated grazing directives; recommend that Forest Service carefully examine the system of preference as built into the current grazing system; Forest Service could sell the rights to grazing tribal lands insufficient to fulfill base property

requirement for permits; recommend that Forest Service create a guide to best practices in working with tribes on grazing and usage rights; recommend the MOU between Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Park Service, Fish and Wildlife, and BIA around BAER funding to encourage the formulation of an internal process to align policy to better serve the public; recommend the Natural Resources Conservation Service to do more public outreach and coordination around their emergency water program in order to provide another layer of assistance to tribal communities after a disaster.

So these were the recommendations. This was what was made. Is there any discussion or is there anyone who would like to volunteer to serve on this committee?

Gilbert Harrison: I'd like to volunteer for that committee. Thank you.

John Berrey: I volunteer. John Berrey.

Tawney Brunsch: Tawney Brunsch. I would also like to volunteer for this committee.

Mark Wadsworth: And if you would, John, I would like to re-volunteer I guess.

John Lowery: All right. Is that it?

Mary Thompson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mary Thompson. I guess BIA would be on here just by -- BIA would be automatically included, right, Kathryn?

Kathryn Isom-Clause: This is Kathryn. John and I were just talking about this, that the BIA has a role in many of these. So I'll defer to the council if you want me to attend each of the subgroup meetings or if you just want to let me know the recommendations that come out of them and then I can follow up, but I'd happy to do it either way.

Mary Thompson: Thank you, Kathryn. John, I have a question about the potential recommendations on this. So the next step would be maybe Kathryn taking some of these back to BIA and -- well, I don't know. What are the next steps?

John Lowery: Well, that's the reason Ralph was here. He discussed with us what all was happening around those permits, and he discussed taking it out for comment and getting feedback from tribal reps. That's where we are regarding Forest Service and their permits, so it's just a matter of just Ralph following up with us and telling us where they are on their stages.

Regarding the MOU between Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Park Service, Fish and Wildlife, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the BAER funding and - you have to forgive me because I cannot remember - I think is burned area emergency recovery or something like that.

Mark Wadsworth: Reclamation.

John Lowery: Yeah. Apparently, all of these different agencies have - yeah, here it is, Burned Area Emergency Response - all of

these agencies within this MOU have BAER funding. Even prior to our discussion about the BAER funding, they are working on an MOU between themselves to better coordinate BAER funding disaster relationship. That's where we are with that. As far as recommending NRCS to do more public outreach and coordination, that was discussed but we need to hear back from NRCS.

Mary Thompson: Thank you, John. I can appreciate that, that they are working together to create this MOU. As the person representing this board or some of the members that are on here, just making sure that this board's interest is described or included in the MOU. Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: I just like to make further comment as there are a lot of other issues I think that will come up between Forest Service and BLM than just the ones previously mentioned. There is another funding level situation which is called BAR - not BAER, but BAR. The BAR is the Burned Area Reclamation Projects. I deal with that extensively when we have major wild land fires, and that's where we get the funding for tribes to -- if their fence was burned down, to restring up all the wire and manage our grazing practices. If we have structures out there that have been burned down from our jackleg fencing to our CRP lands or whatever, you get into that sort of conservation effort after a fire. I just want to say that there are other

situations and maybe we can address those along the way, so I'll reapply. John.

John Lowery: Thank you. Moving along, the next one was Responding to Concerns and Recommendations. On this committee was Gilbert Harrison, Sarah Vogel, Leslie Wheelock. Issues discussed: The group discussed a number of items related to how the council should respond to individuals who appear at council meetings to express their concerns and recommendations. I don't want to go through these bit by bit, but I'm going to hit on those. The council should have a sign-in table with a sign-in sheet with data lines to collect email and mailing addresses from those who wish to make public comments. We do have that outside at this time. All CNAFR members should be in attendance and attending during the time set aside for public comment and time to show respect for the persons making presentation. The person providing comment should be alerted in advance by the chairman of the time constraints. The chair should politely signal to the presenter when his or her time is up. By the way, those individuals speaking during public comment have anywhere from three to five minutes depending on how many people we have signed up. Each person who provides comments should be verbally welcomed by the chair. For every public comment, the chair should verbally express sincere gratitude of the council for the

comment and express how much the council appreciates their participation and work with the council.

Then the last bullet, thank you letters will be sent to each person who presents public testimony. In advance, the main OTR staff will develop a summarized thank you letter as various people present their comments. Staff will know who they are. At the end, OTR staff will probably mail the signed thank you letter to the address provided on the sign-in sheet. The copy of the thank you letter will be retained in the council files. This is Responding to Concerns and Recommendations Subcommittee. Are there any discussions around this or individuals who would like to sign up to volunteer on this committee?

Gilbert Harrison: Thank you very much. Gilbert Harrison from Navajo. This has been a very interesting topic for me because I felt that if we're going to invite the public for input and recommendations or comments, we ought to have a consistent manner of how we treat these comments. One of the things that I wanted to talk about was how do we log or do we give numbers so we can have a log of all the comments because otherwise, we have a number of people that make comments to just say thanks and there's no way of really tracking a comment number or whatever. I would like to see something in that nature where we have a catalog of the comments that are made so we have for the record that these have been made and received by the council. Right

now, I think the practice has been that we allow people to make their comments but really no followup. I would like to see a little more effort in that area. So somewhere in here, I would like to see something of that nature being considered by the council. Thank you very much.

Sarah Vogel: Those are good points. Do you feel that the minutes are insufficient record of the comments? Because we do have a verbatim record of every comment made in our minutes which are posted to the website. And under this process, every person who comes and says anything will get an immediate thank you letter talking about the topic and those will all be saved by us as well as sent to them. I mean, in a way, those stacks of letters in the minutes are a record.

Gilbert Harrison: Yeah. I have seen those, but what I'm saying is we don't have, you know, how do we refer back because every time in other areas we have a number assigned to these comments - whatever the number, number 100 or number 101 - that immediately brings up what you're looking at. Otherwise, you're referred by name or by content. I guess if we want to do it that way, that's fine. But I would like to have a numbering system where somebody comments, this is comment number 1, number 2, number 3 or whatever it happens to be. That's just a recommendation. Thank you very much.

Sarah Vogel: I think that should be fine. Especially if we could do that going forward, I think that would be very easy to implement. I think the DFO is going to be the one carrying that, but a simple index of comments going forward doesn't seem too hard.

Mark Wadsworth: John Lowery, I'd like volunteer for this committee.

Sarah Vogel: I'd like to not be on this committee anymore.

Chris Beyerhelm: Mr. Chairman, I was going to say something. Since you volunteered to be on this committee, I thought twice about it but I think I'm going to go ahead and say it anyway. I'm just wondering if we need a separate committee for these kinds of things. It seems to me that this is just a way that the committee does business, and obviously it has got your interest since you wanted to participate maybe as the chair to say this is the way we're going to do business. But to have a subcommittee and have a phone call, I guess I'd like to suggest again we perhaps suspend this particular committee and deal with the issues associated with it just as a point of order with the committee.

Mark Wadsworth: What I guess made me really think that I needed to volunteer was that if there is basically some real concern or some potential problem that needs attention, just being able to handle that and not haphazard. But I agree with you totally.

If there is a comment that does come through and we have - for the new members in some cases - some of the people that come up to make the comments try to make it personal in some cases. They all have strong feelings in the way that they deal with this, so we just have to handle it as best as we can. So just a precursor.

Chris Beyerhelm: I guess in light of that, I'd like to just rephrase and I'd like to make a motion that this committee be disbanded.

Mark Wadsworth: As another comment, I'd like to take back my name from this committee. Yes, Gilbert.

Gilbert Harrison: Thank you. I wanted to also make a comment here too. Maybe we ought to develop several categories when somebody makes a comment. It ought to be given this category because, otherwise, we just go comment and it's hard to disseminate. There are comments that relate to program issues, it could be to finance, programs that relate to the Bureau of Indian Affairs. There could be others. So I think somehow we need to start putting these in categories, so, okay, this is an issue that should be addressed by Chris' office or by Farm Service or whatever to start steering these comments in an appropriate manner for a response. Thank you very much.

Porter Holder: I second Chris' motion.

Mark Wadsworth: Further discussion, Mary?

Mary Thompson: Thank you. So Gilbert, I understand what you're talking about is when a comment or issue, someone brings it to the floor, a way to follow or track which program it goes to and what happens with that comment.

Gilbert Harrison: Yeah.

Mary Thompson: Yeah. I'd agree that that needs to be done. But at the same token, what the chairman said at the last public meeting, a lot of it was just what I consider to be a lobbying effort for the Cypress funds. It wasn't really getting to issues that this council could address through other programs and departments. So if you were to separate things out like that, then you could get those issues to the appropriate departments to address. I agree with what you're saying, Gilbert, but by the same token, I guess this committee could be discontinued and I would support that. Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: Any further discussion? Okay. The motion has been made and seconded to discontinue the Responding to Concerns and Recommendations Committee. All of those in favor say aye.

All: Aye.

Mark Wadsworth: Any opposed, say nay.

Gilbert Harrison: Nay.

Mark Wadsworth: One opposed. Motion carries. Go on to the final committee.

John Lowery: The final committee is the Subsistence. I was having a discussion with Porter about my hometown. So Lord, forgive me. The members: Angela Peter, Leslie Wheelock. Issues discussed: We discussed the fact that there is not one clear definition of subsistence. Forest Service has a definition, but we are not sure if it is shared by others. The National Ag Statistics Service does not have a definition either, and they administer the Ag census. The subcommittee will continue to look at this issue and search for standard language around subsistence. We also discussed the current management of the Copper River up in Alaska. We also discussed a past study on hoofed animals in Alaska. We think that Department of Commerce did a report on hoofed animals a few years back, and we were trying to find that.

The fact that some major rivers in Alaska had been cut off by the state from fishing for king salmon. These were some of the issues that were discussed and there were no recommendations made at that time. Is there any discussion around this or anyone want to volunteer to serve on this Subsistence Committee?

Mark Wadsworth: I think just to give the previous actions to keep everybody up to date, Subsistence came up as quite a topic point because of the situation with the Eskimos, Alaskan natives, where basically they live off the land. In order to be able to apply for EQIP funding or conservation funding, and at

the time we're talking about the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program that no longer is in existence because it went under the EQIP program where they can apply for that, was to look at the Alaskan area that we were talking about protection for habitat and the environment for moose which some of the people were dependent upon. I personally have been to Nome, to the Kawerak Reindeer Herders Association. Those people will actually hunt walrus, whale to seals. Even in my own country, I would say that there are people that I actually worked beside that probably the majority of their meat comes from elk, deer, moose, and in some cases were able to get buffalo that stray off the Yellowstone National Park.

So when we were talking about the subsistence, we were trying to be inclusive to some of the concerns to qualify for USDA funding in conservation efforts. I don't know whether we'd be able to tackle that maybe into a loan effort. But subsistence I know that it is in treaties, in treaty language, in some of the tribes across the United States. The situation was if we did get this included within the NASS questionnaire, this would be not only beneficial to us as Native Americans but possibly to all Americans who do have subsistence off the land. We've seen reality shows in that aspect. I guess that's one of the reasons why we have the Subsistence Committee, and I again apologize I

wasn't a part of that conversation. But if it does continue on, I'm sure to volunteer myself.

John Lowery: Yes, sir. We were up in Alaska a few months ago and we actually discussed subsistence in numerous venues. We also asked about a definition for subsistence. It sort of liken to that famous saying by the Supreme Court judge, you know, about you can't really define it but you know it whenever you see it. No one had a good, clear definition for us, but everyone told us that they would go and try to find one. We definitely need to follow up on that.

Regarding the king salmon issue, that's really a big issue. We were able to go out west of [indiscernible] and a lot of those tribes or villages out there, they're really struggling.

They're having to get other types of fish that cannot provide what all the salmon provides for them, but at the same, it's a state issue, and they're really trying to figure out a way to get their salmon and to not be stopped by the local authorities. There are definitely a ton of other issues that can be discussed within this committee. I think if Angela was here, she would be the first one to stand up and say I want to volunteer for this. So we definitely want to keep on moving forward with this committee and see just what all we can get out of meeting and gathering and coming up with some ideas.

Mary Thompson: I am wondering if we have involved the assistant secretary for civil rights on this issue as I somehow put civil rights and culture and intellectual property rights and cultural traditions, I kind of lump them altogether. Maybe that assistant secretary or programs within that department could assist with getting this definition of subsistence to be consistent throughout all of the USDA programs. I would put that or I would ask that Leslie and John, as you're meeting with these programs and everything, that you make that a priority for this subcommittee and this council. Thank you. Should I put that in the form of a motion or is just a suggestion good enough?

John Lowery: We will all follow up within this subcommittee.

Mary Thompson: Then we could get a report back at the next council meeting, at the December council meeting. Thank you.

Sarah Vogel: This is Sarah. I sure can't speak for Reid, but I would bet he would be delighted to work on this. But he'll probably -- will he be here this afternoon?

Male Voice: I'm not sure.

Sarah Vogel: I bet we'd find out before December that he would like to participate. That's my guess. He's a worker bee.

Gilbert Harrison: Mark, I have a couple of comments on these subcommittees. One is, you know, we have one that was discontinued - in fact, two committees discontinued. What

happens to the recommendations that had been put forth by the committees? Are they basically valid or was it just a waste of time? What happens? We made recommendations. Those recommendations, are they valid for the committee or is it just like the committee, they go away? That's one question I have. The other one is I think when we talk about members here of these subcommittees, I think a core should be members of the council, and anybody else that wants it should be considered ad hoc committee member. Thank you very much.

John Lowery: Mr. Chairman, I did not get anyone to volunteer for Subsistence. Is no one volunteering for that?

Mark Wadsworth: Oh, I did. We were saying that probably Angela would volunteer.

Leslie Wheelock: Mr. Chairman, I'll stay on that committee.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes.

Leslie Wheelock: This is Leslie.

Mark Wadsworth: All right. I think we have lunch break and we do have to be here at 1:30 for the public comment period.

Everybody, it has to start on time.

[End of file]

[End of transcript]

Council for Native American Farming and Ranching

1:30 PM Public Comment Period

September 26, 2014

Mark Wadsworth: John, just for the record, I say that we are here at 1:30 for the Public Comment Period. I believe we have not received any requests.

John Lowery: Do you want to just call us back in order and say we're now in the Public Comment Period?

Mark Wadsworth: Okay. We'll call the meeting back to order. It is now 1:30. Today's date is September 26, Friday. On the agenda, we did have 1:30-2:30 Public Comment Period. At this time, we have no requests to make public comment. I think we can discuss a few issues and give 10-minute leeway here if somebody still wants to make a comment period, and then we'll carry on with the regular agenda.

I'll just open it up for added discussion. Yes, Sarah?

Sarah Vogel: I think it would be interesting for Chris to bring folks up to speed about all the things that have been going on in his shop and the work that they're doing on credit because there's been quite a bit, right?

Mark Wadsworth: I think he needs to swallow his candy bar.

Chris Beyerhelm: No, I was fine. I think the first really exciting piece of news is that we have been operating under about a \$5-billion lending authority for the last three years. That's the money Congress appropriates us to lend money out. In 2015, that is going to be increased to \$7.5 billion, so a \$2.5-billion increase which should mean that one of the issues we've had for years and years and was actually some of what resulted in some of the discrimination claims is because people had to wait to get a loan. They'd apply for a loan, they get approved, and then they'd have to wait a year, a year-and-a-half to get money. We actually have no backlog of loans approved right now. With going to \$7.5 billion, we expect that to continue. That's good news.

On some of these things that we've worked on the Credit Committee, we actually started trying to work on some of them, not knowing exactly what the secretary was going to say but assuming the secretary was going to turn some of those back to us anyway, we figured we start working on them. We've actually held a training session for Native-owned CDFIs, which our own councilmember attended and had some results out of that. I've actually been talking with Tawney a little more about we're hoping she'll be the first Native American-owned CDFI to get guaranteed lending approval authority. That'll be a good thing. Then, she's going to be our poster child for efforts. I think

what she said was if she could do it, anybody could do it, right?

Tawney Brunsch: I'm a good role model.

Chris Beyerhelm: We're making efforts on that. The next effort is going to be, and we continue to run into this, and I know Zach will probably disagree with me, but there are some barriers for lenders lending an Indian country. In fact, we've had at least ten cases this year where we wanted to finance a cattle herd but the tribe refused to acknowledge our UCC filing on those cattle, which means we can't get a lien on them, which means we can't have security.

Treasury actually has a training program. What we want to do is make it available to tribes to say if you want to adopt UCC laws, here's how you do it, here's the 1-2-3, here's the resolutions your tribal council passes, and here's how it works, here's the benefits to you, blah, blah, blah.

Sarah Vogel: You mean Treasury or the Fed?

Chris Beyerhelm: I'm sorry, the Fed, Federal Reserve. Thank you, Sarah.

That's our next stage, is we're trying to approach it from both standpoints that in order to get lenders understanding the investments that they can make in Indian country, they have to invest but then Indian country needs to kind of what I call hang out the welcome mat a little bit too. I'm not saying they have

to give up sovereignty, but at the same time, lenders operate in the commercial world with UCCs, mortgage filings, those kinds of things. It has to be a two-way street.

Our hope is we can have training sessions with tribes to have them understand how we can make it be more inviting for lenders to come into our communities and make loans. At the same time have training session with lenders, making sure they understand that they shouldn't listen to all the myths about lending in Indian country. They all have horror stories. I made a loan in Indian country and then the tribal council wouldn't let me repossess my collateral and blah, blah, blah. That's the next phase.

Then, the third phase after that, third-legged stool if you will, is just create a consortium of all of the lenders, the farm credit SPA, ABA, IBA, all the major lending organizations to talk about how do we work together to provide more loans in Indian country?

I think there are some positive things going on. I think this council's work has helped a lot in educating not just me but I've been able to educate others about the benefits that they have there. We've made loans. I think, every year in the last three years, the number of loans made to Native Americans has gone up by 250. I think there's 1,200 last year. It's a much greater percent market penetration, if you will, into Native

American community as compared to whites or other groups.

Numerically, I'm saying percentage-wise. I think the NASSS guy said there was 3,700, at least reported on the census anyway.

If you take 1,200 into that versus whatever the white population was, the percent is a lot higher. I think we're doing some good things.

Mark Wadsworth: Chris, I sat on a housing board one time with my tribe and this was several years ago, but that was when they were coming up with the 184 programs through FHA and HUD. Also, being a veteran, I had my VA guarantee I guess that I could also use. When I went searching for a home loan, I knew that to meet the qualifications, I need to put it on a permanent foundation and did as such. It was on tribal trust property, the whole home site lease issue that we were dealing with at that time. Finally, I got to the point that all my paperwork was approved through FHA, but they wouldn't give me loan because there was no foreclosure ordinance with the tribe through FHA. They were saying, you guys need to as an agency deal with us and get this done. I'll go walk over to the VA. The VA was the same thing. You guys don't have a foreclosure ordinance with the VA. I guess if we're doing this UCC, I hope it is what it truly is. It's supposed to be universal, a one-time deal for all agencies within the government rather than the tribe having to pass each separate agency agreement, I guess is what I'm saying.

Chris Beyerhelm: The UCC is Uniform Commercial Code is what it is. It's a federal statute that basically is a database where you register your lien against certain property. I think the issue is that unless tribes adopt that UCC that it's not recognized on the tribe. It almost has to be done tribe by tribe by tribe. I understand what you're saying. For this particular case, they almost have to opt in to the federal regulations because they're not subject to those federal regulations right now. Go ahead, Sarah. Did I say that well?

Sarah Vogel: Yeah.

Chris Beyerhelm: The lawyer will correct me.

Sarah Vogel: It is just a minor thing. The Uniform Commercial Code is a series of all 50 states plus I think Puerto Rico and so on. They've all adopted versions of the UCC. They're almost all the same with slight variations, but you can look up Article 9 Section 203, sub B, and you can find out what that means in every single state. There's uniformity.

When tribes do not adopt a version of the Uniform Commercial Code, the lenders have a perfect excuse not to lend. They may have a whole bunch of other nefarious reasons not to lend, but they have a valid and legitimate reason not to lend because this is for personal property. The UCC covers only personal property.

Years ago, the Uniform Law Commission, which is a very prestigious body that gets together and develops ideal laws for adoption, they developed a model tribal Uniform Commercial Code for secured transactions. It's got a few tweaks that are not in any state law. One example is no one can ever pledge a sacred object. Even if you say I give up all of my personal possessions, by law, you could not give title or secured interest to a sacred object, period. Then, there are other tweaks. This law has been around for a while. It was developed by tribal leaders and the Minneapolis Fed in particular I think has been providing educational meetings and information. The other nice thing is that they also have a system whereby one of the big challenges is the filing system. If you're a borrower and you want to pledge your cows and you're doing that in, say, South Dakota, the South Dakota Secretary of State is going to have a database that anybody can type in that name or that location and see, wow, so and so has a lien on those cows. Then the next lender is going to say I'm not going to lend because there's already a lien. If you don't know if there's a lien already and you don't know that you can step up and have the priority, again, it gives them a perfect excuse. What I found out is that, for example, in North Dakota, the Fed was, with the Indian Business Alliance of North Dakota, doing a seminar on this. The chief justice of North Dakota was there.

The secretary of state of North Dakota was there. The secretary of state said if any tribe wants to use our filing system, we'll do it for free. We'll do it tomorrow. We'll just treat you like our 53rd county, boom, done, and it's ready. I think most of the tribes in North Dakota are looking at that. I think some in South Dakota have already done it.

Tawney Brunsch: We have, right.

Sarah Vogel: Then, that really opens the door to lending. It takes away that excuse. It's a valid excuse that lenders have now. Then, in terms of ability to go to court, I think the big problem is private lenders without some sort of foreclosure code or collection code or something like that. It's less a problem for agencies like Chris' because they have the federal court. They always use federal court. They never use state court. They would never use tribal court. They go to federal court, end of story. It doesn't matter for them that a tribe lacks something. For every other lender, it would matter a lot. That's who Dorothy Bridges and her economist and her lawyer on our committee have been helping us along with that stuff. They need support though. They do these seminars, but we could have them come in and talk to us, for example, if we wanted to. They'll go around the country for free. They print the money, you know.

Tawney Brunsch: Tawney Brunsch from Pine Ridge, South Dakota. I just wanted to speak a little bit to my experience with the UCC. First of all, I'm aware of two tribes that have adopted the UCC in South Dakota and that being Pine Ridge and Cheyenne River. What I would direct you to as a resource around that would both be the South Dakota Indian Business Alliance and in the Native CDFI Network because we're happy to share. I mean, honestly, it's as simple as we will provide you with a template of the UCC of what worked for us. It could be as easy as fill in the blank.

I've also got to experience how nice it is as a lender, Lakota Funds, and from the credit union side where we have that agreement with the state. You can go and we file all of our UCCs through the state's website. You just choose either state or tribe and it's done. You can also do the same searches. They make it very easy. It's seamless really. You're doing it the same way you would whether you were filing from the state perspective or as from the tribe.

I will say unfortunately, I have many, many success stories in working with the courts in collecting. The credit union and Lakota Funds both have a very good working relationship with OST tribal court. To be honest, they are the biggest proponent honestly just in the way that they see us doing things right. We're doing it by the book. We're following the code and we're

getting the judgments and garnishments and repo-ing vehicles on a pretty regular basis without any difficulties with the courts. I'll also say that when we started the chartering process for the credit union, that was one of the first things that the NCUA asked me, has your tribe adopted the UCC? When I could answer yes, you know what I mean, it made it that much more of a likely prospect. It is that important in providing credit to Native communities on reservations.

Chris Beyerhelm: I think to your point, and I forgot, it's not just agriculture. That opens the door for all kinds of lending.

Mark Wadsworth: It's approximately 1:45, no public comments have been coming through or anything like that. I think that we'll officially close the public comment period. With that also, I'd like to mention that Angela Peter is present at the meeting.

John, with the agenda, pretty much -- well, go ahead Gilbert Harrison.

Gilbert Harrison: Mark, this is Gilbert from Navajo. While we're talking some topics in general, one of the things that still, besides the lending and that arena, is that we like to revisit the issue of how do we make USDA like NRCS the paperwork more user-friendly? Because in my experience on Navajo, a lot of the farmers, we have older farmers who are not savvy in a lot of the technological advances and stuff like that. Once they

see all the paperwork that's necessary, they just walk away. It just happens a lot.

My question is how can USDA and how can, in particular NRCS, make the programs a lot more user-friendly, I call it? Simplify some of the requirements and stuff like that. On and off the first term we talked about it, but I haven't seen any leeway in that arena. I think that's one area that I'd like to see some progress. On one forum, you're talking about lending programs for O&M and equipment and other things. On the other hand, you have to have a decent farm or a decent equipment to work with, but you still need to do a lot. It just seems to me like we have to really sit down and work with NRCS and say, how do you make the process more user-friendly? I think that's a topic that deserves attention here. Again, we have all kinds of programs, all kinds of fund available, but if people are turned off by some of the barriers, the programs aren't worth a toot. Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: Is there anyone else that has experienced the NRCS situation? I guess for my own comment, maybe we've been fortunate because prior to CEDs that we've dealt with, county executive or now I met them, county representatives for the NRCS, I would take them out to the field, what I would need. Then we'd say, okay, they pretty well would just fill out the

whole information for us. Then, we'd just have to get their approval, the tribe, and go through that scenario.

Gilbert Harrison: Let me share with you my personal experience with NRCS. There was this program called CCPI, cooperative something agreement, between the Navajo Nation and the Arizona NRCS in which they would provide funding for community projects, not individual but community large projects. My community, we put together a program, master plan, a program to install underground piping, irrigation piping, 24-inch, for our farms because right now, it's all open ditch. It was developed back in the early '30s. We said let's go ahead and put them underground, so we did. We had engineers and everybody. We worked with NRCS.

We had an agreement. I signed on behalf of the community for a \$300,000 contract. What happened was that was basically following NRCS standards. For \$300,000, this is the length of pipe you're going to install. That's what the contract said. Once that was agreed to, we had the engineers design it, the NRC specs. There's a professional engineer in our organization that did that. The actual cost estimate was somewhere in the neighborhood of almost twice what was approved because just the materials alone was \$280,000 of that \$300,000. We could not install this pipeline on \$10,000. That meant we had to go around and start looking for additional funds. I worked with

the local NRCS. I said we're looking for it because nobody has \$200,000-\$300,000 just laying around for somebody to ask. We finally got the Navajo Nation and they go through a bunch of cycle too, so we got on the wrong time of the cycles we had in the year to go. Our program, our proposal was accepted. That's one year. Then, another year to get funded, but then all of a sudden, we're ready to go and NRCS says we're cancelling the project, cancelling the \$300,000 contract because you're not compliant. Now we went through and we got the money all set up, matching funds to actually do the project. Then, they pulled their fair share out. Now we're stuck. We've ordered materials through the Navajo Nation grant. We've got piles and piles of pipeline and supplies but we have no money to install it. We're working with the Arizona district to try to get that fund reinstated so we can go ahead and have money to pay a contractor to install the system for us. Stuff like that really, to me, it bothers me because it's just like any federal government. Monies are not just laying around, but somehow we need to do this.

The other thing too is the requirement now for a SAM and also a DUNS number. We're not computer literate, so we finally got a DUNS number but we're having a problem trying to get a SAM number. I challenge anyone here to look on the Web. This is what NRCS [indiscernible] fill out your forms. I challenge

anybody here to go on the website and see where you can find an appropriate way to do that. Those are some of the things. Like I said, we don't have a lot of computer literate people within our farming community. Those kind of things really is not conducive to a lot of the things that we do.

We now have a DUNS number. We're working on a SAM number.

We've got materials coming in for the project, but we have no money to install the system. Things like that have come up.

It's a personal experience. We're really having a hard time trying to grasp. I say how can a person that Derrick's saying that owns 5 acres, 10 acres of land trying to work it, how can they fit these requirements? It's really hard. Just imagine yourself. You want to work your farm with 5 acres. My wife and I have 15 acres. We have Form F for IRS. IRS says you got to have a profit every five years. I said I would like to see IRS tell me how can I get a profit on 5 acres of land when seeds, fuel expenses are so high?

These are the kind of things that I would bring up when I say we need to understand what the little farmer, the family farms, what they face. We have Navajo Nation agricultural enterprise, thousands of acres, but they have a lot of money. They get tribal monies. They get federal monies. Then they sell their products, so they have a good cash flow. But individuals, it's really, really tough. That's one of the things that I had said

when I replied, how do we help the little people? What can we do to make it simple so that they can take part of these federal programs? This is a real tough question. Somewhere along the line, we need to address and say we got Native Americans got 5 acres, wants to plant some stuff, how do we help him? Thank you very much.

Mark Wadsworth: Sarah.

Sarah Vogel: I was wondering if we could hear from the newly appointed ombudsperson.

Mark Wadsworth: I don't think you have been appointed yet, have you?

Sarah Vogel: I think it happened four months ago.

John Lowery: John, I'll speak. We have our schedule to speak at our December meeting. That was what was discussed internally within USDA with the Office of the General Counsel. That's what I'd like to throw out there, that she would be making a formal presentation at our next meeting.

Mark Wadsworth: Mary Thompson.

Mary Thompson: Sarah, I wasn't aware of the appointment, and maybe at least introductions.

Sarah Vogel: It was a requirement of the *Keepseagle v. Vilsack* case. If she has been appointed -- I've been introduced but we have no card, no name, no phone number. It seems like it's a good opportunity.

Mark Wadsworth: Well, is there any problem with it, John, as DFO or --

John Lowery: I'm on record.

Mark Wadsworth: Yeah, okay. Would you just like to introduce yourself, ma'am?

Joan Dee: Hello, everyone. We had made introductions ever so briefly yesterday morning. I did not stand up but just at least introduced myself. My name is Joan Dee [phonetic]. I did start at USDA a few months ago. Just by way of background, I came to USDA by way of the Environmental Protection Agency. I worked at EPA for 23 years in a whole variety of different roles and responsibilities in terms of both policy level. I worked on water quality standards for about five years of my career there. I also was the regulation manager for a draft regulation that actually had to do with water quality standards across the U.S. Then, more recently, in the past 10-15 years have been working in the area of conflict resolution. At this point in time, what I am doing is to actually get the office up and running, so I'm working really hard to do that. That was the reason why we felt that it would make more sense for me to come in December to your meeting and to give a formal presentation at that time. I'm trying to think of any other things that would be interesting for you to know. Just very quickly, my background is actually I'm an urban planner. I'm looking forward to having

the opportunity to work with each of you. I felt that it was really important for me to come today and yesterday of course as well to just listen to the conversation, get to understand some of the issues that you're facing and trying to grapple with as a council.

In terms of my role, it is coming out of the Keepseagle settlement agreement, which is how I'm being brought on board. The idea is to be able to help identify issues and barriers that are barriers to access in terms of USDA programs, in terms of both financially and technical assistance. Hopefully, that at least gives you a little bit of my background. You all now at least have a face to this person who's on board right now.

Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: Go ahead, Sarah.

Sarah Vogel: You're housed within the Office of the General Counsel?

Joan Dee: I am for administrative reasons only. I am actually an independent, separate own entity. It's just myself, but I am a very separate entity within the USDA structure and certainly reporting through the General Counsel as the secretary's designee.

Mark Wadsworth: Derrick, did you -- all right, well, thank you. I guess we'll be hearing from you in Vegas too. Thanks. Eric [phonetic].

Gilbert Harrison: Mark, this is Gilbert. I thought we were going to also get a briefing on the secretary's response to some of the recommendations. Is that forthcoming or is that going to be somewhere down the road? Thank you.

John Lowery: Mr. Chairman, may I please speak?

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, John?

John Lowery: I got one thing of housekeeping real quick before we dive into the secretary's response letter and other business. Yesterday, during the council meeting, my laptop was used for our presentation and stuff. There was a little flash drive on the side that was taped in purple, had a purple tape around it, anybody seen that roaming around here anywhere? That belongs to the hotel, so anybody seen it? Charge it up, \$45. Other than that, if you see a little flash drive with purple tape, please let me know.

Male Voice: You got purple tape? I got some flash drives you can put that --

John Lowery: This man is awesome. I do have the secretary's response letter that was snail-mailed to us. I'll be passing that out, and I'm going to ask Leslie if she will read into the record. Also, I believe after that, we can go over the recommendations' sheet that's in your binder and discuss further actions.

Leslie Wheelock: Do you want me to start reading?

John Lowery: Thank you.

Leslie Wheelock: This is it, right? It's on both sides of this piece of paper.

John Lowery: It should be just [indiscernible].

Leslie Wheelock: Mr. Chairman, if I may, I'll start reading this. It'll take me a little bit of time.

Mark Wadsworth: You bet you. Go ahead.

Leslie Wheelock: This is Leslie reading. In the letter dated September 26, 2014 from the Office of the Secretary, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington D.C. addressed to Mr. Mark Wadsworth, Chairman, Council for Native American Farming and Ranching.

Dear Mr. Mark Wadsworth, thank you for your letter of May 23, 2014, sharing recommendations made the Council for Native American Farming and Ranching.

I apologize for the relayed response. I would like to thank you and your colleagues for your service on this advisory board.

The recommendations provided encompassed a broad array of U.S. Department of Agriculture authorities and will receive a thorough review by my administration to determine the role USDA agencies have and moving them forward.

Numerous recommendations promote the ability for farmers and ranchers in tribal communities to access capital. One of the council roles is, quote, to evaluate other methods of creating

new farming or ranching opportunities for Native American producers, end quote. Your deliberation and work reflect this goal, as well as other goals of the council. USDA continues to work on ways to increase awareness of departmental resources available to the general public and targeted audience.

During my tenure as secretary, I have made it a priority to identify strategies that will lead us to a course of action to be much more effective in conducting outreach. The Office of Tribal Relations works closely with the Intertribal Agriculture Council and other partners to ensure Indian country receives information and updates in a timely user-friendly fashion. I have asked OTR to review the recommendations you have made regarding outreach.

Your list of 17 recommendations is indicative of the effective work the council has undertaken. Your list of recommendations will be provided to the correct agencies and partners. OTR will work with each of these agencies to review these recommendations and coordinate prioritized responses.

You can expect updates on progress in response to these recommendations during future council meetings from department representatives.

Thank you once again for your letter, the council's recommendations and the tremendous efforts of the council thus far. Sincerely, Thomas J. Vilsack, Secretary.

John Lowery: Mr. Chairman, in your binder, I think it's under Tab 4, it's a spreadsheet of recommendations that the council has made. To date, the council has made 22 recommendations altogether. This spreadsheet was drafted to show what progress has been made and to show what else needs to be done. I will update this spreadsheet as we move forward. I think there's a couple of other columns that can be added to this. What I wanted to do, and I do know that we have individuals who will be leaving soon, but I wanted to just go down this list of the 22, say what they were and what has currently happened regarding each of these recommendations.

I say that to say this. Some of these recommendations, as I've said before, are low-hanging fruit. They have been taken care of already or there's already action in place to take care of these or try to push them forward. At the same time, some of these will take months. It will take a long time to get these recommendations put into place if we can put them into place. I'm just going to start off. Please stop me, please ask questions, please have discussions. Tell me to be quiet and sit in the corner. Just jump in.

Number one, the secretary should increase the number of CNAFR meetings per year. This was dated 2-4-2013. Our office was assigned. OTR will request additional funding for this fiscal year to have three in-person meetings and a teleconference.

This will equal four meetings. For this next fiscal year, we're going to push to have four meetings, three in-person, one via teleconference. I do have those typed up and are ready to show you as far as the next tentative dates.

Number two, the secretary should increase funding to provide for the increase in CNAFR meetings. Number two goes hand-in-hand with number one. We're going to have to request additional funding. We will request additional funding and we will do our best to have the money to have those three in-person meetings. Number three, the secretary should direct appropriate agencies to recalculate the formulas used to set up priority for WHIP funds to include special recognition for projects related to the species relied upon for subsistence. This was an NRCS agency assigned. This was directly related to Alaska. This has actually been taken care of as we were drafting this. At the time, the state conservationist, Bob Jones, was meeting with tribal members on the ground. They were able to allocated additional WHIP funds to those villages that needed it. That was taken care of.

Number four, the NASSS should be directed to include subsistence farmers and ranchers in the next census of agriculture. We have told two NASS officials, NASS officials came here last September and spoke to you as councilmembers. There were discussions about how to do a better job of including subsistence farmers

into the ag census. We were told that there was not a lot of real estate left on the ag census document itself. But if there was a way to increase outreach to Alaska Native communities and if there was a way to say, hey, the food that we are cultivating, we're doing our thing, it's up to a thousand dollars' worth of produce and product, that we can include them as farmers and ranchers on the ag census. There is additional work to be done in the subsistence subcommittee and NASS is willing to work with us on that. It's just a continued effort especially in rural parts of Alaska.

Number five, the council recommends keeping Janie Hipp involved with the council through continued membership on the council or on a consultant basis. Necessary follow-up due to her prior position with USDA, some of her USDA communications with officials is currently limited. I think she has a two-year period after coming out of federal service where she is not supposed to have too much communication with other political appointees. Is that correct?

Female Voice: [Inaudible]

John Lowery: Okay. She's limited in working with us, but if Janie ever wants to come and speak to this council via public comment period, she's always free to do that.

Those were the five that were done back in February 2013.

Number six, the council recommends the secretary encourage all USDA programs to adopt a micro-project philosophy. This is currently with our office. We're going to work with the agencies. We're going to work with NRCS and RD and also with our friends over in FSA who are currently doing this. Our goal is that at the next council meeting in December that you will have a progress report on this particular item here. I do not know what type of lift it will take within the agencies, and I do not know what authority that the agencies will have to be able to do this. Still, what we put out there is a recommendation and we can see what - if anything - can be done, and what can be done, how quickly can it be done?

Chris Beyerhelm: John, if I could. I feel a little uncomfortable because I'm part of the USDA family, but I guess today it's more important that I represent this council. I think it was the hope of those of us that were on the committee that made that recommendation that the secretary would direct the agencies to do that and not just let the agencies make a self-determination about whether or not they thought it was appropriate or inappropriate. I guess what I was hoping for was the secretary responding to us, saying, I have directed the agencies that were possible administratively that this will be done.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, Mary?

Mary Thompson: Thank you, Chris, for that comment because I think that's what Gilbert has been talking about for the last couple of days. That would serve the small farmer in a much better way. Maybe we should go back to that one and see if we can address it in a more direct way. Thank you.

John Lowery: Number seven, the council recommends that the secretary foster the engagement of community development of financial institutions in the delivery of credit to Native Americans. Once again, this will be assigned to Rural Development and also Farm Service Agency and other agencies within USDA. We are asking for a progress report on this at the next council meeting.

Number eight, the council recommends that the secretary foster improvements of the lending environment in Indian country. Once again, this will be assigned to agencies within USDA. At the same time, our office, primarily Leslie, is engaged with other agencies, with other departments on this White House Native American Affairs Subcommittee that deals with economic development. This is an issue that they are dealing with. I think that we would definitely be able to wrap whatever they're doing into what is happening internally with our individual agencies. We will report on that as well at the next meeting.

Number nine, the council recommends the secretary establish an interagency taskforce on lending in Indian country. Once again,

this ties into what the White House Native American Affairs Council was doing. All these secretaries were coming together I think four times a year and they are directing their staffs to work closely together. They have formed an interagency taskforce and they are working on this. I think that we would definitely be able to provide an update on this at the next meeting.

Mark Wadsworth: John, Sarah has a comment and then I'll make a comment.

Sarah Vogel: I guess as I read the secretary's letter, it does appear that he hasn't become involved yet. This letter says, "Your list of recommendations will be provided to the appropriate agencies." Recognizing that you guys at OTR are doing the legwork and so on, but on some of these things like, for example, getting the American Bankers Association to pay attention to Native Americans or to convene in these kinds of things, that's nothing that you guys from OTR can do. The secretary could do that.

I guess my hope is that we've had a four-month delay. In the meantime, lots of stuff is going on and the council had to be reappointed and so on. But, if there could be some kind of maybe a sense of urgency or to circle back to the secretary and say we really appreciate all the great work that USDA and all its agencies and everybody is doing. But these are some things

that deserve personal attention, I mean not all of it obviously but some of it. I would echo the thought that on some of these issues, if the secretary maybe could just -- I think everybody knows what I'm talking about here.

Mark Wadsworth: Sarah, also, I'll just jump back to the number-six recommendation. I just wrote on there as a part of being another subject that we'll put on the conservation committee to readdress. Maybe it'll be more appropriate in our next recommendations if we have to re-say the same thing over again, I guess we could do it in a proper way and letting that know that we haven't seen or feel that we are getting the correct attention to some of these issues, but we're pleased with others. We can tack those as the issues as a separate but not as a general statement. I believe that'll be more appropriate. Yes, Porter.

Porter Holder: Why do we have to ask again?

John Lowery: Let me say this. One of my duties is to handle correspondence for our office. I see a lot of letters that come in to the USDA and that eventually make it to the secretary. I can tell you right now that you're not going to get a letter from the secretary that says we shall do ABCD. You're not going to get that. That will never pass our lawyers. That will not pass OBPA. That will not pass a lot of different agencies.

They will not put the secretary or the department in a position that says we will do ABC and this is how we'll do it exactly. I say that to say this. You can send letters and you can say please do this. I can tell you that that's the way it's going to be working internally, but he will not say I will direct my people to do A. They will do it in six months' time and they will deliver this at a time. It doesn't work just like that. I mean there are just so many barriers and there are so many people looking at it. It just isn't going to come out exactly the way you guys hope that it does. I say that on the record, being recorded as someone who sees correspondence all the time. What you got here is I have designated [sounds like], I have pushed this forward, we're going to get back to you, and I'm telling my people to provide reports to you based on your recommendations. That's about as hard core as you're going to get. You're just not going to get that ABC. I'll direct my people to do ABCD. You're not going to get it. I say that as in not that it is not happening because it's going to happen because he's told us to come back to you. You can expect updates on progress or response to these recommendations on future councilmember meetings from departmental representatives. He's telling you that you will hear from us and that you will get updates on your recommendations.

That's about as firm as you're going to get. I'm not in any way saying anything bad about anything. I'm just telling you that we're not going to get specific this will be done in a month's time on December 23rd. We're just not going to get it. What we can do is we can get our people coming before you saying this is what we're doing based on your recommendation, and this is when we'd like to get it done. We're going to let you know when we get it done, and we will invite you to comment and to help us to get the word out.

If I get fired tomorrow, I guess I'll do but I'm just telling you. I don't want to go through this whole list and you guys are sitting here and say let's write all over again. Let's not. Let's not write it all over again because it's written, it's wrote [sounds like], it's there, he's got it, we got it, and our people will come back to you, because he said that they would come back to you.

Mark Wadsworth: Mary Thompson.

Mary Thompson: Thank you. I think that some of these recommendations become a little bit more clear to me as we discuss it and go through time and get explanations about things. With this recommendation number six, I think that we could probably explain that recommendation a little bit better, or if we had the different verbiage that we need to go in there to just be more specific about it. If I were just to read this,

recommend that the secretary encourage all USDA programs to adopt a micro project philosophy, well, that's not very specific and don't say a whole lot. As we talk more about micro project philosophy, and as Gilbert has been talking, it's I guess just a common language policy that can be understood by the layperson farmer that is not technologically savvy if that's making any sense.

We've talked before about regulation statute policy, a manual, the handbook, and on down the line. I still keep going back to that policy and handbook. If it's not specifically spelled out in statute and regulation up here on the congressional level, then whenever that policy gets handed down to the on-the-ground field level, those interpretations could be a little bit more specific in order to take care of that farmer that Gilbert is talking about. I'm not necessarily saying take this same list back and keep going back with the same list and everything, but I think we do need to take a look at what we're trying to say here and do that in a more clear and specific manner.

Then, maybe we could get, I don't know if it's a different response that I'm looking at, but at least a more direct avenue as to who it needs to go to, if that makes any sense. John, I think whenever I have mentioned taking things back or revisiting it, that's when I'm talking about revisiting. As I revisit things, I get a better understanding of things. Maybe, Lord

knows when but maybe, one day, I might have a recommendation that could work. Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, Derrick.

Derrick Lente: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Derrick Lente, Sandia Pueblo. When I received my binder with the recommendations of the past council, the council before me, I was impressed, one, with their ability to collaborate and bring to light some of the issues that I found myself to facing with people and similar situations where I'm from in New Mexico. When we received the letter from the secretary this afternoon, I guess I want to say the general letter from the secretary this afternoon, I guess I had to halter [sounds like] in my expectations of what I should be realistically expecting when I sit on this council.

I think that this council was developed for a certain reason. That's to create change, to create good change, to create positive change, to create an equal playing field, so to speak, so that as Native Americans, we can expect to get certain things that are near and dear to us because we come from a completely different arena than any other farmer does. When I see a letter like this, I want to know that if I'm sitting here around this table, I'm taking time out of my family and friends and coming to Washington, D.C. that I want to expect that we're going to be heard and we're going to be listened to.

I realize that Mr. Lowery's office, I appreciate all your help and you've been nothing but professional. I think the USDA in all its efforts in I guess getting this meeting set up is not on my behalf unappreciated. I'm very much appreciative of everything that's been done. When I see a letter like this, I want to make sure that when we're here, we're going to get some things done.

If it means setting realistic expectations or maybe combining this list and just making it 10 bullet points of what we want to see done in the next four months, the next year, perhaps that should be the step that should be taken as opposed to kind of we want all this done. That's fine and well, but as one councilmember at this point, I want to make sure that my time here isn't an ill-used. I appreciate it.

Mark Wadsworth: John Lowery.

John Lowery: I'm good.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, Reid Strong.

Reid Strong: I don't have a microphone. I understand the kind of responses that have been raised. I just wanted to echo again what John said and make some effort to make it clear what the strength of the letter is. It's in this commitment to continue to talk to the council about it. One of the tools that I think the council has to make sure that there's progress going forward is to extend the invitations to the specific leadership and the

specific agencies that are focusing on these projects to come and talk to you. If they come here, that's also an opportunity for them to really listen directly to you. They're going to be the frontline in implementing anything that happens anyway. Even very general policies that are good, the effect on us will really depend on how the details end up getting worked out. It's maybe hard to see the direct impact to some of those conversations, but they maybe a little subtle but they actually are I think a very powerful tool. I hope that you'll consider using that as a way to make sure that your items are being followed up, and to test the secretary's commitment if you're concerned about it. I think he did make it fairly strong for this commitment to go forward.

Mark Wadsworth: Sarah.

Sarah Vogel: Derrick, I think you stated it extremely well. I think we're all in that shoe. This council was put here for a very specific purpose by the settlement agreement. I have no reason whatsoever to doubt the secretary's sincerity and commitment to the settlement. The people at USDA have done nothing short of stellar in this whole process. Nonetheless, I think there's a little bit of communications problem that went on. This letter would have been fabulous to get back in June. I think it's just a little bit difficult to feel that we did all that work and then eight of us are back. And that even though I

know stuff that's going on at the OTR level, the thing that I'm thinking about is some of these things that need dialogue.

Obviously, Mary, you're right. The letter was outlined. I mean was an abbreviated summary of our concerns. I'm thinking about the credit stuff. We had a six-part plan. We're going to change the world. It isn't going to happen overnight, but the dialogue has to start.

I think that we have the subcommittees and perhaps the subcommittees can push forward on a lot of these things. I am pretty confident that as we do research, we can get help and support from the agencies so that these dialogues go forward. This is important stuff. This isn't about us. This is about all the farmers who are encountering barriers, and these are barriers. Some of the solutions we're asking the secretary to work on are enlisting the support of other people, the American Bankers Association, the Independent Community Bankers Association, NASSDA - National Association of State Departments of Agriculture - to enlist all these other actors in this issue. Those are the kinds of things that won't come overnight, but it would be good to be making progress. We're not expecting - I don't think any of us were expecting - a response to all these issues, got her done. That would have been too much. This council has a limited lifespan and we have a lot of work to do,

so we'll see. We didn't get going on it very fast. When we did, it was like 16 recommendations all in one lump.

John Lowery: Seventeen.

Sarah Vogel: Seventeen. We've got the parts I think too. I love the fact that Chris was here and saying this is what we did. He was sitting at the table. He knew about the recommendations. I just really, to the degree that these recommendations need to get to key people within USDA, it's got to happen.

Mark Wadsworth: I guess Tawney, did you have to leave the meeting? She's got to go catch a plane. Are you going on the same flight?

Female Voice: [Inaudible]

Mark Wadsworth: You're also going to catch the cab or --

Female Voice: Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: You bet you. Have a safe trip. Nice to see you.

John Lowery: Thank you, Sarah. Thank you, Tawney.

Sarah Vogel: [Inaudible]

John Lowery: Yes, ma'am. I'll be sharing them with the council here in just a few moments, but I will send it out via email to you.

Sarah Vogel: I'm sorry I have to leave.

Mark Wadsworth: All right, John, if you want to continue through the list?

John Lowery: Yes, sir. We're at number ten. The secretary should develop a national Native American radio broadcast and tribal outreach strategy. This is in our office. Our office will work with the Office of Communications. Our Office of Communications, when they're pushing out tribal stuff, already touch base with tribal media regarding newspapers and Internet. This is something that we will work with them on regarding making sure that radio is involved in that outreach strategy. That's definitely something that our office can follow back up with you guys during our next meeting.

Number 11, the secretary should develop training opportunities for USDA and Bureau of Indian Affairs staff to facilitate collaboration and encourage increased access to capital throughout Indian country. This has been worked on in numerous ways. We just need to bring it together. This has been worked on in regard to the MOUs that we have with the BIA. This has also been worked on with regard to other interagency projects. We have not gotten the secretary himself to say that we would develop training opportunities, but we will work on that and we will provide a report at the next council meeting on number 11. This is always an issue. Access to capital is always an issue

within Indian country. There's not too many meetings you are going to be in that does not have to do with access to capital. Number 12, the secretary should foster better outreach to lending associations. Once again, this is on our office, Office of Tribal Relations. We will work on this ourselves and our office will report back to you guys at the next meeting on this particular issue.

Number 13, the secretary should seek an increase in FRTEP funding. This is dealing with NIFA. The Deputy Undersecretary Ann Bartuska came here today and spoke to you guys regarding FRTEP. We just had a long discussion about having some of these things answered.

Well, FRTEP, number 13 and 14, you had the Deputy Undersecretary in here today talking about FRTEP because of this letter of recommendations that was sent to the secretary. That's the reason she was here today, was because of this letter. Tim Grosser was here as well, talking about FRTEP. We're definitely moving forward on that based on you all's recommendations to the secretary.

Number 15, the secretary should improve internship access to Pathways and other programs for tribal students. This has been sent over to our friend, Lawrence Shorty, and the 1994 Tribal College Program. They're already working on this. This letter of recommendation actually helps to push the work that they're

doing to get more internship opportunities for our Native students. This is something that's already happening. Based on your recommendations, it will get a larger push now. We will ask Lawrence to come before you guys in December and provide an update on the internship program.

Number 16, the secretary should explore American Indian and Alaska Native hiring preferences for both Pathways internship program as well as overall USDA hiring. Once again, part of this is going to be with our tribal college program. The other part regarding the overall USDA hiring, we will have to work internally on that. We do not know what the statutes are or the limitations, but we can definitely get back to you guys on this one.

Number 17, the secretary should explore interdepartmental hiring using Indian preference. That's definitely a question for our lawyers, for Office of General Counsel. We will explore with them, discuss with them, and get back to you guys on number 17.

Number 18, the council recommends the secretary have the Forest Service clarify that rights to use tribal lands may satisfy the base property requirement to obtain a grazing permit. Ralph Giffen came here yesterday and spoke to the council. He came here and spoke to the council because of your letter of recommendation that you made to the secretary. He discussed number 18, number 19, number 20, and number 21, so he hit on

four of your recommendations yesterday. I do understand that some of you were not satisfied with his response, but as he said, they are pushing to try to get this thing out the door so they can receive comments. While he was sitting here, I asked him if we could include your letter as comments. He said yes, so your letter of recommendations will be entered as comments on the grazing permit revise, redraft, whatever it is that they're doing. He was here because of this letter of recommendation.

Mark Wadsworth: Gilbert.

John Lowery: Also number 21. Yeah, 18, 19, 20, 21.

Mark Wadsworth: Gilbert had a --

Gilbert Harrison: Thank you, Mark. John, that number 18, again, I would like to ask Catherine. Can you ask or maybe seek an opinion from the BIA to see if the trust lands, if somebody has a valid use of trust land and a valid grazing permit on trust land, can that satisfy the use of the requirement for a base property? Thank you.

Catherine Webber: Sure. I will definitely follow up on that. I think it will require some interfacing with USDA, but we can make sure that we coordinate and get back to you on that.

Gilbert Harrison: Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: Mary Thompson.

Mary Thompson: Thank you, Mary Thompson speaking. Also, Catherine, would you pose the question, would a possessory

holding or possessory interest meet that requirement for base property? Some tribes may have that, something a little bit different.

John, I appreciate that Ralph Giffen - I believe his name was - that was here yesterday. But I think with the public comment period that the forestry service is going to do, it's our responsibility and it would behoove us to make a comment. All the other farmers and ranchers that we know need to take that moment to exercise their right to make a public comment. Thank you.

John Lowery: Mary, I will place the recommendations that you guys have made as a council. I will make sure that those are included as comments with them, as far as you guys doing this. I totally agree. You need to get out into the communities and stress that.

Mary Thompson: The comments of this council as a body are one thing, but my personal comment is the second thing. If I can get my brother, my sister, my mom, my dad, my niece, and my nephew to go echo their sentiments then we got a few more public comments. That's what we need to start doing. That's only going to reinforce and back up the issues and the points that this council is making.

When we finish up with this, I'd like to make a comment about StrikeForce project. Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: John, I think we have one more.

John Lowery: Yes, sir. The secretary should create a memorandum of understanding between the agencies that administer the Burned Area Emergency Response Program. Prior to this, when we met with the Forest Service lady, she did tell us that they were already working on the MOU between all of the departments that have the BAER funding program. She said that that was underway. We wrote this as a recommendation to help push that along. I will seek her out and I will find out where that is as far as putting the MOU together. I will report back to you guys on that. Out of 22 --

Mark Wadsworth: On the 22, could we also include BAR funding?

John Lowery: Yes, B-A-R?

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, Burned Area Reclamation.

John Lowery: Are there numerous agencies also do that as well?

Mark Wadsworth: I believe so, yes. The Forest Service after a burn, they'll come back [cross-talking] models on ranges and replant.

John Lowery: Let's discuss that in the subcommittee.

Mark Wadsworth: Okay, sounds good.

John Lowery: Out of 22 recommendations from what I've counted, at least 12 of those 22 have gotten something done or people either came here and spoke to you regarding them. We still action on 10 of these as far as just getting back to you guys.

Then as far as total completed, I think we only got five completed. We do still have a lot of work to do. Just like I said, you've at least heard from either the agencies or it has been completed, 12 of the 22. Our goal is to make sure that you guys are updated on the other ten and also provided a progress report on the others that have not been completed by our next meeting in December.

Mark Wadsworth: John Berrey, I knew you had your hand up before. Did you want to make a comment? Okay. I guess we can proceed along. It's pretty much the next agenda, John, it was the same as yesterday's. I think Mary wanted to make a comment about StrikeForce. We'll just open it up to open discussion. If we want to, we can wrap this up a little bit earlier too.

Mary Thompson: Thank you, Chairman. Mary Thompson speaking. Was what we just went through and the discussion there, is that going to be part of or will we draft that and incorporate that into our goals for the new term or are you going to do that specifically?

Mark Wadsworth: To just monitor them or have them as accomplishments?

Mary Thompson: Well, because we've gone through and done the accomplishments and everything. I didn't want to jump too far off the subject there because all I had to say about the

StrikeForce is that we did a radio broadcast project and have a draft link that talks about some of the USDA programs and the things going on in North Carolina. I thought if we had a minute that maybe we could show that short, little version of it here because what they're wanting to do was another little mini video StrikeForce project with I think it's Ute Mountain in Colorado and the Hopi in Navajo. Those are the projects that will be coming up in the future - this year. If we don't have time, it's no big deal. I just thought I'd share that information with you. I'll just let you get back to the rest of your working session agenda and wait until the end.

Mark Wadsworth: Mary, if you'd like to explain what StrikeForce is for the new members.

Mary Thompson: Thank you, Leslie.

Leslie Wheelock: This is Leslie Wheelock. StrikeForce is an initiative of the secretary that combines the forces of Farm Service Agency, Rural Development, and Natural Resources Conservation Service in a number of states to work more effectively together on projects. Because just as our tribes have had to bounce from department to department, seeking funding, sometimes they've also had to bounce just within USDA agencies, seeking technical assistance, monetary support, not always knowing which one to go to. I think people recognized that it just wasn't a tribal problem. It was a USDA silo

problem with those agencies all siloed in their own little spaces. StrikeForce is an attempt to break down those silos and have those three agencies working closer together.

The StrikeForce initiative doesn't include all of the states that have tribes in them. We've been doing an independent research project, trying to figure out where we have states that have StrikeForce initiative kinds of things in place already.

We haven't found a state yet where there's not been a concerted effort by those three agencies as well as in some cases up to five others going out to give what we call One USDA programs in Indian country. When we find one, we'll take care of that.

We've been talking to folks in Montana, in Oklahoma. We haven't covered California yet, which I'm worried about.

I think that on the whole, our USDA offices, whether they are in StrikeForce states or not, are working more concertedly in trying to get this work done. You all can tell me that's wrong, but that's my general impression. I suspect there are places where it's not quite accurate.

StrikeForce, it's an initiative to try to get USDA offices to break down their own silos and work more effectively together.

We have I want to say about 16 states that are StrikeForce states, more or less. That includes about half of the states that have tribes.

Mary Thompson: Thank you, Leslie. North Carolina is one of those. That's the same thing we're trying to do with this council - those barriers and those internal things within USDA programs. With the new CFR change then, you know, it's happening on the upper management level too, but we do have a short video and like I said, it's in the draft form. If we have time to take a look at it, that would be great. Thank you so much.

Mark Wadsworth: Is everybody alright watching the short video? Is it 5, 10 minutes?

Mary Thompson: [Indiscernible]

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, Derrick.

Derrick Lente: Derrick Lente, Sandia Pueblo. With all due respect, I'd like to at least finish what's on the agenda in terms of business, and then perhaps if we have time to make us see the video.

Mark Wadsworth: You bet. We already went pretty well through the past two years on our agenda last topic period. Now we're going to discuss goals for the new term. I wasn't a part of the discussion and development of this agenda. Discussing council goals I guess, what was the main idea?

John Lowery: The main idea was to give you guys a chance to just talk and discuss. That's what you guys tell me all the time, that you want more time to talk and discuss. You guys

have set aside time to talk and discuss. I put those there as just a way to generate conversation, but I just don't want anybody leaving here today saying that we did not have time to talk and discuss.

Mark Wadsworth: Gilbert.

Gilbert Harrison: Thank you, Mark. Thank you, John. The goals for the next term, and I think I alluded to it yesterday. I think we ought to just basically pick a few top choices and work on them, because if we just open up the door to everything, we just end up things -- we're not getting too much done, I feel. We're making recommendations here and there but really, the resolutions are far and few in between. I think maybe the council should take a look at and say, do we use this one or do what's feasible within the next year, next two years? Are we going to set some priorities? We've been talking about loan programs. We've been talking about NRCS. We've been talking about some issues that have continued to come up. Should those be what we work on? I'd like for the council to take a look at that.

The second thing I would like to also put on the table is that these two days' sessions are good. But maybe we ought to get all the program stuff out of the way, the new stuff, the reports and all, and set aside a good day to work on issues. In the past, we just basically touched on issues and it's time to go.

I think that maybe we ought to devote a little more time to talk about issues and see what we can do. Those are some of the things I'd like for us to do.

The third thing is how do we get the word out so we have more participation from the public input? What kind of a broadcast or what should we put out in the Indian country to say we're now accepting comments? How do we do that? Within the last term, I think we had some comments. I think in Vegas, we had good comments, a lot of comments, but then again, like today, we didn't have any participation. How do we get word out to the people that we are interested, listening, and helping? I think those are things we should talk about as a council. I'm putting these out on the floor. Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: If we're just going to open this up for the issues and concerns, that's what John is trying to do right now and that's what he's tried to do yesterday. When I reread that letter again from the secretary and then I read it three times now and four times, I'm just trying to put myself in his shoes too. You always have to understand their way of thinking or way of doing business. As I read up more and more, I could see more of the highlights coming out. At first time, I felt really disappointed. I'll be matter of fact about that. It was just more of go-get-them-tiger kind of deal when we're trying to go get them and we're just looking for that avenue of making a

difference for everyone who is affected in Indian country, especially in Indian agriculture.

I guess when I hear we wouldn't have any comments here in Washington, D.C., it doesn't surprise me because I don't feel that the average producer would have the opportunity to jump on a plane and come down here. That's just speaking frankly.

Maybe one of the things that we did before that we didn't have here at this time was a conference call number where they could call in their comments if they so choose. Maybe we ought to open that door up again for the next period.

I know that as a part of this council and stuff, we were struggling with is this a value to me, is it a value to the people I'm doing, is it a value for my time? I don't think that we're wasting our time at all. I think that when we were struggling, I really didn't even know how to explain what I was doing to the people that I was trying to serve. But I'm getting more comfortable with what I'm doing and what I can explain and what I can say we've done.

I think that in that aspect, now I feel more comfortable enough to reach out to the mass amount of email networks that are available out there within USDA and Indian country saying the next Council for Native American Farmers, this is who we are, attach our news release to it. This will be our next meeting coming up and we enjoy comments. We'll entertain that as a part

of the position of advertising who we are and what we do in the future. Maybe we'll write up a draft template that everybody else could use also, that you could send out to the separate agencies, USAD or whoever, MAB with maybe the Northwest Indian Agriculture Council or the Southwest Indian Agriculture Alliance, SWIAA, all these others who are [indiscernible] association.

That's just a matter of I think if we can get those letters out about our meetings coming up, maybe we can attack it that way. But it's got to be a joint effort. Everybody's got to jump in there and be behind it. I don't think it's fair in a way to say, okay, John, Leslie, get this done because they got a lot of work to do too and probably are pretty swamped. I appreciate their efforts.

Let's get this out about, I guess, Gilbert, when you brought up the situation about the EQIP. I'm jumping off from the communication aspect to a specific concern. I think that that's basically a regional problem because I do not see it within our region. I know that we have had people, and actually experienced it ourselves where we've gotten extensions to our programs that have been three to five years down the road, dealing with EQIP, which the executive or the state con [sounds like] could authorize. When they came back to you stating past your deadline by one year, you're out, say, hey, looking for a

whole [sounds like]. That didn't happen to them. I'd be one free. And then maybe that is an issue that Reid should become aware about. Why didn't you give them? These extensions that are available.

Also, the aspect of I know a lot through my history of dealing with Navajo, your Native American NRCS people, Jerry Gilmore and what was the other Jerry? I can't remember his last name.

Anyway, I believe they were fluent in Navajo and were able to walk with their producers to fill out those applications and as such. I don't know if this is something that we can work with. Then, I was thinking about this micro project solution. I'll tell you this. I don't look for problems. I look for solutions. The thing is with that application process, you have this IRS short form, long form. Maybe there should be a short form for a certain dollar amount as opposed to having a long form for everything that you have. We could possibly make that recommendation as specific, getting down to the specifics.

My other concern, I was going through these. I think it was fantastic. I thought it was great that John went through these recommendations because he had to go through all of our other recommendations and then break them down, [indiscernible] and everything else and then what happened here, what happened there? Having that spreadsheet, it helped me to better understand what was going on because I know that Ralph would

have been here had we not made a recommendation about changing the permit system.

The thing is, and I guess one of the things that we didn't open up the door about, I think this permit issue is deeper than what was presented. See, our tribe under the treaty has this right to have Forest Service and BLM allotments within our ceded boundaries. That is a part of our treaty. That's part of our agreement, to utilize any un-allotted for food, livestock, and subsistence. As a part of that, they've honored that agreement with us because we have tribal members that actually utilize the allotment system but we do it under the aspect of the tribe. The tribe does the allotment application, then it utilizes the interested tribal members who want to go into that area and does the selection process that way.

I think that's where all the other tribes may hit a stumbling block because they only do it for us on ceded ground. Anything that isn't ceded, we're going to be in the same situation as everybody else. It has been done. It's in the past. But if we can bridge that gap to open that door for everyone, I think it'd be a good situation.

I think it's very important because one of the things that Ralph failed to say to you is that some of these producers - and Sarah was explaining it too - when they sell their ranch, they can actually sell their allotment permit. I have a ranch with 300

acres, and by the way I got 11,000-acre allotment, now I'll sell you my acreage here for 150,000 and then I'll sell you my allotment for 75,000. That's public land. Also, I have a problem with it when it's in ceded land of a tribe because shouldn't that be our opportunity? It's a heavy issue I think as I get more and more involved with them.

I'm just speaking out loud of what I feel that my concerns are and maybe suggestions of helping or solutions. I think probably the permit allotment situation, if we get something accomplished that opens that door where they have to let everybody apply, including tribal people because that's what we're asking for basically, then I think we've done a real good job in that arena. It's going to be a heck of a fight I think. Other than that, any other concerns and issues that people want to let us know about?

Porter Holder: Gilbert - Porter Holder, Choctaw Nation - you were talking about how to get the public more involved in our meetings. One thing I would say is if we get some resolutions to these recommendations, we might get some public involvement. I read this letter too six times now and I'm just not that impressed with it. It's kind of like Derrick said, we're taking time away from our job, our families to do this work. Are we making suggestions? Are we making recommendations? I think if we see some of these recommendations get resolved, maybe we'll

get more public input. How can this council move forward if we keep circling back to the same thing?

I understand he's not going to say you have this done on this day, this done on this day, but I expect a little more action than that. I feel like we need to do more on the other side to get the public involved. We need to make some progress. We can't make progress if we keep circling back to the same recommendations. That's all I got to add to it.

Mark Wadsworth: Derrick.

Derrick Lente: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Derrick Lente, Sandia Pueblo. As one of the new members to this committee, I think just for me to take it back and provide comment to Mr. Lowery via email on my suggestions I think as opposed to just going around and just talking out loud right now would be most appropriate for me. But I apologize if I offended anybody with my interpretation of what I felt the letter meant to me. I, in no way, shape, or form meant to disrespect or even discredit any of the work the USDA has done thus far, but simply stated, I think that maybe I just said it out loud and it was what everybody was thinking.

It did really look like a letter that I, as an attorney, would write if I didn't have a whole lot to say to somebody but I wanted to get something back to them. I think that's what happened. It was completely in some sense of the word out of

context. In any event, that's the hand we're dealt with, and how we move forward from here is the next step. If our next step is we meet again in December, then what do we expect to have done in December? I want to make sure that if I'm sitting here and then I appreciate all of the insights and each one of us has their own special story and we all represent a certain specific group of Native Americans. Although we are Native Americans generally, we all come from our special places and we have different experiences.

I want to make sure that those special places and those experiences that I have that are near and dear to me are represented. I want to know that at the end of my term and knowing that this committee or this council has a very limited term in itself that at the end of this term that we did something. That I did something that I can be proud of, that I made a change somehow, someday. That I can go and tell my friends and those in other places that, well, if you want to do this, this and this with the USDA and get their help, well, then, go see this person or that information is here, just help them out in that sense. Because if you can do that, because I can't do that now, but if you can do that at the end of this term, then I think you've succeeded in some sense by allowing somebody else the opportunity that maybe we around this table already have in terms of the ability to farm and ranch at our

respective reservations. Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak.

Mark Wadsworth: Gilbert Harrison.

Gilbert Harrison: Mark, thank you again. I really share Derrick's concern here that we want to be able to say we made a significant contribution. I think what I see is that there are certain comments that should appropriately be recommended to the secretary. There are certain other concerns that should be basically done between the agencies. I think that somehow we need to say, okay, this is appropriately addressed to USDA Forest Service. This is to farm loan program, farm services. I think that somehow we need that kind of guidance to say, okay, we can do this between inter-department or within the BIA. There are others that really it requires the secretary to make a decision of some type.

I think somehow we need to start thinking about where do we address our concerns and who to? I'd like to see some effort in that because, certainly, I think in Chris' shop, we've had problems with loans and issues. We can work on those, but other issues require the secretary's intervention. Instead of giving him 20 recommendations, maybe we should just work on two or three that he can really be of help. Those are something that we need to as a council to start thinking about. How do we clarify our requests?

Then, the other thing, Mark, is unfortunately, back when the treaties were being signed, your tribe got that privilege to get allotments. We don't. I think the last time we met in Vegas, it really hit home when this guy from one of the pueblos came and said, "That was my ancestral grazing area, our grazing area. Now there's a fence. We can only go up to this much. Some outside rancher has use of that. We can't even go to that because we have no base property." You see what I'm saying? To me, I think if we can somehow get some of the equality in terms of applying for and having a fair chance to get back at these grazing rights or whatever, I think we've accomplished something. To me, requesting a few extra dollars for certain programs, to me, that's a programmatic issue, but I think these are some things that we basically face. I'd like to see us tackle those issues. Thank you very much.

Mark Wadsworth: Angela Peter.

Angela Peter: He got it right. This is Angela Peter from the State of Alaska. I was just sitting here taking in some of the things that were being discussed. Like Mark, I always like to find solutions and innovative ways to do things when things aren't working.

I think that the most important thing - I said this before - is the committees that we set up; however, I think that we need to

get more efficient with the committees. I know we met, was it once or twice over --

Male Voice: [Inaudible]

Angela Peter: If we could have a schedule set, sent to email to everybody and then possible even -- you know, I'll volunteer to help with this. It's not that I want you guys to do it all. To have updates of, say, I'm on a committee and Gilbert, I could -- what am I trying to say? I can have a schedule to where this is what happened with our committee, Gilbert. Have a spreadsheet that says that. In that way, when we get here, we'll be a little bit more informed. That's a suggestion.

What got me to that suggestion is Josiah. I just can't quit tooting his horn or whatever. I really appreciate the updates that are given to us. It keeps me informed, and a lot of that goes to other people within the State of Alaska because of your efforts.

Then, the programs - who was talking about that? Was that you, Gilbert? The programs that are specific to the place you live. Alaska is having a heck of a time with this, as you guys all could imagine. We have subsistence. We live off the land. We don't raise our fish. We don't raise our moose per se, but we're trying to use the USDA programs to enhance the habitat. We haven't quite figured out how to efficiently help the salmon; although, the culvert projects are helping some.

What I would like to see is some state-specific programs or project schedule. So, if I'm from Alaska, I could look at this piece of paper and say, oh, well, that program is applicable to my state. Also, where others, you can go and say I never thought of using that program. I have this problem, this program would work for it. That's just something that would work for us because in Alaska, this being new, we just don't quite know which programs work, but I think it would be beneficial if a person or a farmer or a rancher could pick up a piece of paper and say, wow, that's a program that I could use. Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: Thank you, Angela. Mary.

Mary Thompson: Thank you. I might as well go ahead and spit my little goals out, too, as far as what I would like to accomplish in the next two years. One of them, as Angela mentioned, and that's the committee work that we become more specific with our recommendations. That's one of my goals on the two committees that I sit on. Hopefully, we'll be able to participate in other committee meetings.

Another one is carrying out the Council for Native American Farming and Ranching mission or message to other entities. It's been mentioned here several times, whether I go to the -- well, we go to the Intertribal Ag Camp Conference, IAC, and that's one good place. But in my area, there are more. I don't know what

you call them, groups or folks I get, whether it's USAT [sounds like], any of the organizations there that are using or dealing with or working with USDA programs. That way, I can get our message to them and hear from them what barriers they are encountering. At that level, I think a lot of those barriers could be worked through because some of the things maybe just local level or regional issues and not legislative statute issues.

The third thing is on those regional issues, and I've said it several times, Chris, that we need to make sure from this level that those policies are being interpreted consistently throughout Indian country, and not just Indian country, wherever they serve, whomever they serve. I think that is the majority of the problem. I think, Gilbert, the NRCS program you were talking about or project? Where I'm at, we went to state con. We talked to the NRCS person, and we worked around and we worked together and we get the issue resolved. As I serve on some of the other committees and worked with the NRCS and some of the other programs, I've seen those issues a lot - a lot. Some states get along great with their state con. Other states cannot; they don't even talk or communicate.

I think that those are the big issues that we can work on. I guess those are probably the three things that I will try to do in the next two years. I don't know where I'm going to find the

time though. I think like everything else, if we didn't have to sleep and garden, we'd have a lot of time. Thank you so much and thank you everyone.

Gilbert Harrison: Porter and the members of the committee, this will be one of my last thoughts. I would like to ask maybe Leslie or maybe the secretary. I would like to have an introductory letter that the councilmembers can use. Otherwise, I get treated like a vacuum cleaner salesman. I go to these meetings. I say I'm on the council. They say who's the council? If we had a letter saying so and so is a member of the council, that introduces us as members here.

The other thing, too, is it's been my experience when we go to conferences and meetings, people ask for a calling card, business card. Right now, I just say, well, I don't have one. You see what I'm saying? Otherwise, there's no communication. I think we attempted to get even calling cards the last time around. It never got anywhere. I see this press release that says this is the secretary's council for Native Americans. They're going to do all of these, but that's it. We don't get anything beyond that. I think if we are to make a difference at the community level, it will be nice to have an introductory letter. It will be nice to have a calling card, just business card to say if you need further addition, further information --

Female Voice: I'll go fix two of them right here, Gilbert Harrison.

Gilbert Harrison: Go ahead. Print it real nice. You see what I'm saying? Thank you.

Porter Holder: Haven't we discussed some of these before? I think, John, was there a problem with that before?

John Lowery: Yes, sir. We have discussed this with the Office of Communications. Office of Communications just like as this lawyer was telling this yesterday, they handle this stuff and they get to say who is able to carry the USDA banner. In the Office of Communications' eyes, with the council not being employees of the department, you cannot. In their world, it's a way of you putting yourself out there, and it might be interpreted as you've been an employee of the USDA. We have fought this battle. Dr. Leonard, who sits on this council, went toe to toe with those guys and they won't give. I will not say he went toe to toe. I mean he went toe to toe. It was pretty spectacular. This has been fought. I'm sorry. We tried with cards. We really have.

Mary Thompson: Might I suggest something?

Male Voice: Yes, Mary.

Mary Thompson: Thank you. Gilbert, you know, what I did is I have my card printed up at home. Basically, all I put on there is my name and my email address and my contact information.

Then, on the other side, I put a list of the committees that I serve on. I serve on the National Association for Resource Conservation and Development. I serve on my local Southwestern North Carolina RC&D. I serve on Council for Native American Farming and Ranching. I just put that information out there. If somebody needs to contact me about that or basketry or I have pottery or whatever, it's all there. Thank you. You might consider something like that though or that might be something that we could consider or we could do and not get put in jail over it, right?

Mark Wadsworth: Yeah.

Gilbert Harrison: Can we use this [inaudible] to print our own cards? [Inaudible]

John Lowery: I haven't heard nothing.

Mary Thompson: Well, check it first, not after the fact.

Male Voice: Try and force Gilbert.

Mark Wadsworth: Angela Peter.

Angela Peter: Angela Peter from Alaska. I have a suggestion to possibly make a brochure that has Council for Native American Farming and Ranching discuss on the next page who, what it is, and possibly the members, why it's formed. I don't know why that would be a big deal. Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: Lilia.

Lilia McFarland: If I may be so bold, it seems like a good tool for you guys to use would be the press release announcing your selection for this committee. That might be something that would help. I assume that you all's names were listed on that press release. It might be a good tool in the absence of, while we wait on other things.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, Derrick.

Derrick Lente: Mr. Lowery's office already has a website, correct? It seems like it could be easy enough just to put profiles of the committee members perhaps with a picture and that actually serves as a business card. If somebody questions your validity as a councilmember, just say, go look at my picture on the website. It's on there. That should be good enough, right? We could spend the December meeting in a room like this making business cards, all of us.

John Lowery: On our website, they do have a profile and a picture of the councilmembers. Granted it's not updated for the three new councilmembers that are current, but we do have a profile and we do have where you're from and we do have your picture on the CNAFR website. We will need to update that, Derrick. We definitely need to get a photographer and take some pictures.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, Angela.

Angela Peter: I'm Angela Peter from Alaska. I don't think it's to validate that we're on the council so much as so to provide information for outreach. That's what I use it for. Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: Leslie.

Leslie Wheelock: I kind of like the brochure idea. It's not cheap but it's just basic information on a piece of paper. I don't see any problem with putting it out there. We could do a PDF. You all can print it off if you run out of them. It all looks the same. It's got your names on it. It's factual. It's not advertising. You're not holding yourselves out as USDA. Your name is listed on the brochure. I think we ought to look into that. Thank you.

Female Voice: Big card.

Mark Wadsworth: Any other issues? Yes, Leslie?

Leslie Wheelock: Mark, I just like to jump in here. I'm not really happy with the letter either, but I'm not really happy with the letter because I've got a whole devil of a lot of work to do as a result of that letter. The secretary does look to our office to do all things Indian, to wrap around the department and make it understand our issues and our concerns. There are a lot of people in the department who understand those issues and concerns. I think part of this is in how we go out there and throw things together for this because the council had three recommendations before the stack came out. I think the

secretary is somewhat concerned at this point, about how much time is left to get things done.

You will see the results of some of the discussions in this meeting very shortly, as soon as we can get some more regs out. I think you'll be really surprised at them. I can't even talk about them. In terms of some of these, if we need to put memos on them, if we need to call meetings around them, if we need to go back to the secretary and say these people aren't interested in talking to us about this, then we need you to sit on them. I think that's what we need to do, and I think he has very clearly directed us to go out there and pull the agency folks together who need to look at these things and prioritize them or have the agencies prioritize them because, again, he's worried about getting stuff done.

But then, to bring them back in here to talk to you or to talk to the council, the fact that the directives, the Forest Service directives that were discussed yesterday, have taken so long to get through the process is in part a result of all of the farm bill items moving through the regulatory process. They've caused a traffic jam. We were actually trying to get the directives through before the farm bill pieces started moving. Because they had to go to so many different departments of the federal government, not just within USDA, it took a while to get them back into the process with all the farm bill pieces.

I don't know when the Federal Register piece is coming out. But at our next meeting, we need to have somebody come in and hopefully the directives will be out, or when they come out, so they should come to the next meeting and talk to the council, again, about what's in the directives. That would be your own personal consultation in order to make sure that we get the voice. The discussion that we've had here is made real for the Forest Service people who are trying to collect the comments on that.

Some of these other pieces, we have been talking some of them around already. We have been talking about them since before you put them down on paper at the last meeting. I think that, again, putting them down is half the battle and getting us to keep this chart updated is the other half. We will continue to work on these things. We take this as a mandate to get some work done. Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, John.

John Lowery: Mr. Chairman, can I speak? Gilbert mentioned setting more time aside to discuss issues, and we are looking at having a December meeting. I'd love to hear from the council and see just how much time you guys want set aside so that at the next meeting, you guys have the adequate time that you need to discuss issues. I feel like if you guys could say, hey, we want a day, we want half a day, we want two days, then we can

definitely plan a schedule for that and allow all the time needed for you guys to discuss and talk and to not feel like you did not get enough time. I'd love to have some guidance from you guys.

Mark Wadsworth: Gilbert.

Gilbert Harrison: Thank you, John. I think that will be good, I think, ahead of time if we know, are we going to be talking to Chris? Are we going to be talking about farm services? We can say, okay, these issues, they're there to talk to the council. Also, I would like to see if we can get somebody from USDA engineering department to talk about some of these overdesign and cost overruns because they are the ones that set the standards. I think it will be good if we have one half day of work session, but we ask the appropriate agency or agency head to sit down with us and see what can be done. Otherwise, it's just a matter of we hand it off, it's handed off, it's handed off again. Maybe that's something that we can do. If we are going to have a good workshop, working session needs to ask the heads of these programs to come in and share some time with us. Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, Leslie.

Leslie Wheelock: I would like to extend an invitation to Lilia or somebody who is continuing to work on the Beginning Farmer and Rancher program to come to our meetings. Because this is

just a microcosm of the issues that arise, everything from difficulty filling out the forms; why do I need it done; the SAM number; how I get on grants.gov; who do I go to, to get X, Y, and Z? It comes up in here. A lot of this is not just a tribal thing. It's a rural thing. It's a broadband thing. How do we make it easier for our people who want to do this work, to do this work? Gilbert, how do we encourage people to join us? How do we encourage our youth?

These are not just tribal concerns but it affects the tribes more intrinsically than a lot of other spaces simply because we are these little microcosms with a lot of land issues and a lot of history and a lot of treaties. There's a different perspective but our tribes don't have any -- I shouldn't say it that way. Our tribes have, in addition to many concerns, the same concerns as a lot of our beginning farmers and ranchers. If this council can be that microcosm to inform the work on the beginning farmers and ranchers' piece, that actually adds value to what the council itself is trying to do because then, we join voices with many, many more people. Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, Chris.

Chris Beyerhelm: Gilbert, if I may, and I don't know if you're saying this but I want to clarify. The way USDA works is if you ask somebody from NRCS to come talk to you about micro projects, what they're likely to do is probably send the highest ranking

official they have available. And just in due respect to my colleagues at NRCS, that's not who you need at that meeting. You need the actual engineers, because what's going to happen is that high-ranking official is going to go back and say council wants us to not over-engineer these projects. The engineers are going to say, sorry, can't do that, and that's the end of the conversation.

The engineers need to be in the same room. They need to hear your frustrations. They need to hear the passion that comes behind it. If we're going to do those kind of meetings, we need to especially invite different kind of people. The model needs to be different. We don't need a PowerPoint presentation about what everybody has to offer. We need somebody sitting at the table, having a dialogue with us, so we can express the concerns and there's a back and forth. If we're going to do that, I'm just suggesting we change that model.

I'm not saying the high-ranking officials can't come, but they need to bring some staffers with them that can talk about the details of the program. They're the ones that you have to convince to change it, because they're the career people. We have a saying at USDA. They be; we be. Politicals, they'd be going; careers, we'd be staying. I'm not trying to be disrespectful here but this is the way sausage is made. You got

to get the career folks on board and that's the people we need at these meetings.

Mark Wadsworth: Also, I'd like to recommend in that same aspect, because I think there was a huge flaw made in the cost reimbursement schedule. Because, obviously in my experience, when I dealt with EQIP projects, they're very generous in funding that for the cost schedule. In this case, I think they missed the boat by a mile in actually the cost, it sounds to me. In addition to the engineer who also is the person that makes those cost rate for your project reimbursements. Yes, Mary Thompson.

Mary Thompson: Thank you. Mary Thompson, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. If we schedule a half a day meeting and maybe it has to be a committee meeting or something like that where we can bring in this case the engineers over there, the "we be" people, right? How does that fit into it? Is there any constraints or restrictions as far as a council meeting having to have the designated, having John there, and having to be printed or published in the CFR? We can hold a meeting like that without having to go through that whole little process and rigmarole. I mean process.

John Lowery: As a subcommittee, yes, you can have that at their meeting. As a full council meeting, no, we have to go through the whole rigmarole. But the point was, you know, Gilbert said

that he wants these one-on-one sessions, which is fine. I really like the idea of bringing somebody in front, Noller [phonetic] who is the leading engineer at NRCS, and having him sit down and go over some of these finer points with us. But at the same time, what you're saying prior was you want one-on-one with the council to be able to sit and discuss issues. Is that the same thing? Is discussing issues amongst councilmembers the same thing as bringing in somebody like the lead engineer at NRCS and sitting down and discussing with them those issues, or are you still talking about separate time for council to sit and discuss amongst themselves?

Gilbert Harrison: [Inaudible]

John Lowery: I mean one-on-one as in the council and that person, so as in subcommittee but not the full council?

Gilbert Harrison: Gilbert Harrison here. I think it would be good if they met with the whole council, then everybody gets the same information, what we're talking about. Because if we go just as a subcommittee then there's a secondhand information when it comes back to this council. But if we all sit down, we all talk about it, we get it from - what they say - the horse's mouth, I think that will be more beneficial.

John Lowery: That would satisfy you wanting to sit down and discuss the issues amongst the council.

Gilbert Harrison: Absolutely. Right.

Male Voice: Point of clarification, John.

John Lowery: Yes, sir.

Male Voice: If we do it as a whole committee, that meeting I assume then is open to the public. But if we did it as a subcommittee then it perhaps wouldn't be?

John Lowery: Right. If it's a subcommittee where you guys are acting as the conservation subcommittee, then it can be a one-on-one.

Male Voice: I guess all I'd say is I don't disagree, Gilbert, that it should be the whole committee. If you have a subcommittee, and I'm not trying to not be transparent with the public either, but if you have a subcommittee, you're likely to have more free conversation. It's just something to think about when you start doing the tradeoff between the whole committee and the subcommittee and having a smaller group to talk about an issue.

Mark Wadsworth: As a suggestion, maybe we ought to just have one day where an hour for each subcommittee presents to the council throughout one day of their matters. During that timeframe, bring in the specialist for that committee during that timeframe.

Male Voice: Then get back together as a whole committee at the end of the day and report out. Yeah, that'd be a good compromise.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, Leslie.

Leslie Wheelock: One of the other things that you might consider is having your committees use to inform the "we be's." That way, we can actually bring more "we be's" to the table, and they can make the recommendations. They're bosses. The people up on top, the "you be's" or the wannabe's or whatever they are, they will have the direction. They will have the requirements; this is what we're trying to do. What we need are the people who actually do the work to sit down with our folks and say, well, maybe there's a solution; maybe there isn't. Let's run it up the flagpole and see what flies. It's potentially that kind of creative combined thinking that could solve some of these problems. It's just an idea. Thank you.

Mark Wadsworth: Any other issues or concerns? I know Mary Thompson had a short, little video on StrikeForce. Would you guys like to look at that at this time?

Mary Thompson: Mr. Chairman, if John has it ready to go, maybe we could look at it, or if you'd like, maybe we can take a break and have it running. Those that are interested in looking at it can stand around and talk and look at it.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, Gilbert Harrison.

Gilbert Harrison: Mary and Mark, thank you. I think we're getting close to the end, so we got to just keep working and

finish off this session. If we take a break then more people are going to be gone. Thank you. It's just a suggestion.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, Derrick.

Derrick Lente: If I may, Mr. Chairman, Derrick Lente, Sandia Pueblo. I agree with Mr. Harrison completely. I think we've talked about -- but for maybe the next meeting in housekeeping items, that's where we're at? It seems like it's a 50-minute discussion or it should be. Maybe I'm over simplifying it, but I think we can get it done.

Mark Wadsworth: Yeah. What we're going to do, John, is we're finished with the issues and concerns. Let's go into the next meeting and wrap her up.

John Lowery: Let me do the housekeeping first. Number one is as has been discussed, we have set subcommittees. I need you guys to participate in those subcommittees. You guys have set them. You guys need to participate in them. I definitely look forward to you guys participating in those subcommittees.

Also, I will be sending out minutes to this, from this meeting. I need you guys to look over those minutes, sit down, take an hour out of your day and read over the minutes, make sure that they're correct. I definitely need that from you guys.

Also, with your travel, please make sure you give me your receipts back in a timely fashion, so you can be reimbursed in a timely fashion.

Also, with our next meeting, I have set the dates up here on the screen. Our next meeting is going to be during the Intertribal Agriculture Council's meeting, annual meeting time, which is December 10-12. This will be up on the screen in just a moment. What we've done in the past, and I'm always willing and able to listen to you all, is that usually on that Wednesday of the Intertribal Ag Council, we usually hold a listening session. In the past, we've set aside three hours for public comments because we usually get a ton of public comments during the Intertribal Ag Council. Usually, that's what we do on Wednesday. Then, on Thursday, we'll have a full day. Then, on Friday, we would do a half a day regular committee meeting. I'm willing to look at that and revise it and do whatever you guys are wanting to do regarding the agenda and the time. If you want to do full day on Wednesday with time set aside on Wednesday for public comment, and then do a full day on Thursday and then call it quits, or if you want to do three full days, whatever you guys want to do. I don't want anybody to leave and not have enough time to work together.

At the same time, let me say this. The president will be meeting with tribal leaders sometime soon. I'm just guessing, but there's a good chance it could be during the second week in December. If the president does meet with tribal leaders during that time, there's a good chance Leslie will not be here for the

meeting. There's a good chance others may not, but we're still geared forward with having the meeting.

March meeting, Oklahoma City, I've talked with Jerry McPeak. He has been pushing this now for two years to get out to Oklahoma City. He said the best time to get out there would be the week of March 23. He said that the Oklahoma state legislature is in session during that time, and that with it being Oklahoma City, we would access to many of the 39 tribes in the state of Oklahoma. Oklahoma was also the state with the most Keepseagle advocates [sounds like] as well. There's a lot of farming and ranching going on in the state, along with others as well. We have set that for March 23.

Also, the May meeting, for the past two years, we've held the teleconference on the first Friday of May so that would be May 1. Then we have another meeting September next year, 2015. It will be around the same time next year as we've had it this year.

That's what we are looking at with upcoming dates and meeting times. Is there any questions regarding those? As I put on the side, all this is tentative so we can change it anytime. The December timeline is pretty much set as far as the timeline itself, but now regarding when we will meet and how long we will meet and the public comment period, we still need to work out the agenda of course. Yes, ma'am?

Angela Peter: This is Angela from Alaska. Does that mean I start planning now for the Alaska meeting?

John Lowery: Yeah, ma'am, getting [sounds like] me about \$50,000 from Alaska and we'll definitely start planning that. That's what happens when you do one, then everybody is going to want one. We're going to try. Got to get funding. I got to go shake the trees of the agencies. I'd like to get about 15,000-20,000 apiece but times are tough.

Mark Wadsworth: Gilbert.

Gilbert Harrison: Thank you, Mark. John, the December meeting, in the past, we were allowed to attend the Intertribal Ag on a Monday and a Tuesday then go to our session. Would that still be advisable?

John Lowery: Yes, sir.

Gilbert Harrison: Thank you.

John Lowery: Also, I put a list of the subcommittees down here from what you guys told me earlier. If I'm missing anyone's name, please let me know. Angela, I took it upon myself to put you with the subsistence subcommittee. I don't think you'll be too mad about that. Subcommittees, you're looking at between now and the second week in December. I really think you can have at a minimum two meetings between now and then. What we did with the subcommittees in the past was that each one of these subcommittees nominates a head, so pretty much a

subcommittee leader. I will work with that leader to set up times for you to have a meeting with your subcommittee. Yes, ma'am.

Female Voice: Could you put my name back on the conservation, please?

John Lowery: Yes, ma'am, I will. Well, actually, you know what? While I have all you here, who wants to be the head of these different subcommittees so I can start working with you to set up a time to meet? All the subcommittee meetings are done by teleconference. They're usually done in the afternoon to accommodate people just like Ed Soza in Southern California and Angela out in Alaska. We do have a conference call line that we share with you guys. If anybody wants to nominate themselves or nominate someone who's not here to be the lead, please go ahead and do that now. What about the BIA facilitation?

Male Voice: I nominate Sarah to be the leader of education and extension.

Female Voice: I second that.

Female Voice: [Inaudible]

John Lowery: Angela for what?

Female Voice: To be the leader for conservation.

John Lowery: Conservation?

Male Voice: Yeah, I agree. I second it.

Female Voice: I'm still here.

Male Voice: I don't want to speak for Sarah, but she's been the leader of that and I think she expressed some interest, but I don't know if she's willing to be the leader on two committees. Was anybody else -- ?

John Lowery: Let's put for her credit desert [sounds like] and let's open for somebody else to be education and extension, because I agree with you, she has been leading the credit desert. I think she wouldn't appreciate having to chair two.

Mark Wadsworth: John, I'll volunteer for the Forest Service, BLM.

John Lowery: Yes, sir.

Mark Wadsworth: I nominate Leslie for the subsistence.

John Lowery: We still have education and extension.

Female Voice: My problem is my [indiscernible] that organize itself.

John Lowery: BIA? All these are done via teleconference.

Female Voice: Yeah. See, now, I think we need somebody else on the education, someone, a career person [inaudible].

Male Voice: Jerry was on that.

Mark Wadsworth: Yes, McPeak.

Female Voice: Because they have more information.

Mark Wadsworth: Lilia, you were on this before. Are you willing to --

Lilia McFarland: I am waiting to hear from the administrator. I've been talking to him today about which subcommittee he'd like to engage in. It seems like this is an area of need. If it's okay with the committee, may I report back through John at a later time?

Female Voice: No answer.

John Lowery: Did I just hear Angela say that she wanted to be the leader of subsistence? With that being said, does somebody else want to be conservation and climate change instead of her?

Female Voice: I nominate Mark.

John Lowery: Mark is leading Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management. [Inaudible] step forward.

Female Voice: That leaves Reid.

Female Voice: No, he's BIA.

Male Voice: I'm glad to do it. I guess I took the position on the credit one, and maybe this is important that non-USDA folks would lead these things, but I'm glad to do it if the council wishes me to do that.

Female Voice: We wish you to do it.

Male Voice: I guess silence is affirmation in this world.

Female Voice: That's what you get for making that joke when I walked in.

John Lowery: Derrick has agreed to lead the BIA facilitation. Chris has agreed to lead conservation. Credit desert would be

Sarah, education and extension, to be determined - education and extension people. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management will be Mark; and subsistence will be Angela.

Angela Peter: I volunteer to start this spreadsheet if everybody doesn't mind, so we could start generating what's happening. In that way, if we want to, we could still have input before the meeting so we might be more productive, we might not, I don't know.

Male Voice: Leslie, do you know, would this committee have access to SharePoint? That would be a great vehicle to do that.

Leslie Wheelock: I don't know whether they have access or not. I think there is something out. I think there is a program that we all have access to. I don't think it's SharePoint. I think it's something else that's kind of quirky, but we can look into it because somebody told us about it last year. USDA has it. Nobody uses it, and it's apparently a sharing mechanism program.

John Lowery: Yes, sir. I'm done. What I'm going to try to do that will serve you guys is to talk [indiscernible] about the agenda now for December so we could go ahead and do that there. You guys could tell me what are you thinking about doing just so we can go ahead and get that set. Yeah, that's it. Thank you.

Mary Thompson: Chairman, if we could go and do that StrikeForce little presentation now if we're through. I guess just as a side note, I wish they've named it something else besides

StrikeForce because it's almost like scary or intimidating or something.

Male Voice: [Inaudible]

John Lowery: This is an audio file. I haven't listened to it yet, so we're all hearing it for the first time.

Mary Thompson: I've listened to the first five seconds of it.

John Lowery: I think it's 10 minutes, 15 minutes. Let's see if it works.

Mary Thompson: It is in its draft form, so they're still going to be doing some more editing. It just shows the work they have in the USDA. [Video presentation 2:33:53 - 2:48:41; audio gap to 2:49:22]

We know what StrikeForce is to begin with, right? It's just that name that throws everybody. We're trying to get our [indiscernible] were there. We do use RC&D. They're not funded anymore, not part of. They still work with NRCS. If we continue to do that -- the invitation that I've got expresses more than what the conference that we're having to do. We'll have all of the folks from six, seven states up there, from Florida through Mississippi, Alabama, Southeastern region. A lot of those folks work with the same thing, rural veterans [indiscernible] Indian and all those states, Indian tribes. We're doing the same thing. That's why I give the invitation for the USDA folks to come and participate and see not just what

we're doing to assist each other but what barriers we're running into that might possibly have an easy solution that for us on the local level [indiscernible] some of you go through. Thank you very much.

Mark Wadsworth: Porter.

Porter Holder: If there's no other business, I make a motion we adjourn this meeting.

Mark Wadsworth: It's been moved and second too.

Gilbert Harrison: I'd like to make an announcement.

[Indiscernible] my wife comes to these meetings, but it just so happens that [audio gap to 2:51:40]

Mark Wadsworth: Anybody? Well, all right, that motion has been made to adjourn. All those in favor, say aye.

All: Aye.

Mark Wadsworth: Anybody opposed? Motion carries.

[End of file]

[End of transcript]