

WTAC Meeting Minutes
Monday, April 18, 2011

In attendance: Virgil Seymour Colville, Matt Berger Kalispel; Stephanie Martin Makah; Mike Stamon Quinault; Larry W Swinomish; Shawn Yanity Stillaguamish; Jeff Tatro Stillaguamish; Cherie Moomaw Colville; Martin Bales Colville; Gina Kerizna USDA; Dave Brown USDA; Rebecca Toupal USDA; Gary Burns Shoalwater Bay; Cindy Spiry Snoqualmie; Robin Slate NRCS Olympia, Rob Pixer Suquamish; Richard Brooks Suquamish; Terri Parr ATNI; Kristen Potts ATNI; Roylene Rides at the Door USDA; Shiraz Vira USDA

Roylene called the meeting to order at 9:40 pm

Introductions and overview of the meeting.

Overview of structure – two full time positions that will work with the tribes – really trying to get out and meet with the tribal councils. Reviewed packet on the different offices under USDA – a lot of the tribes are not familiar with the funding that USDA has, USDA is the second largest budget behind Defense (see handout on funding) Forest service is sister agency – one tribe in Arizona got a school built with rural development funds, more tribes want to come to the table once this council is up and running. Reviewed tribal newsletter that Rebecca and Shiraz put together a newsletter that will go out approximately every six weeks. The goal is to feature the good work the tribes are doing, we are very open to ideas and suggestions of what you want to see in here. NRCS AI/AN policy – this is what we are here to talk about to see about putting one together for the Washington tribes – really feel like this council can be a great mechanism. Once we get over the formality of the council, we can get your feedback and put things in place – USDA operates on five year farm bill – every five years you can change direction of where funding is going – 2013 is the next farm bill that is another thing this council can do is look at where the funding is being allocated – in January 2012 the planning will start and the council can provide feedback and direction.

Terri Parr gave overview of Wisconsin workshop she attended – seven tribes were in attendance – very apparent the tribes were much more aware of what the farm bill has to offer the tribes; some projects were very similar to NW issues, water shed, forest, etc. The Wisconsin tribes were very proactive in standards addressing their specific needs.

Roylene: one thing we have done through ATNI is establish an agreement where we will be able to pay for your travel – with the cuts we had about a \$118 million cut – which isn't as bad as others – budget is about 5 billion – we don't get earmarks – little decrease on paper. Farm Bill funding is mandatory and in place. We have a little flexibility with budget we have put some money aside for tribes. We really want the tribes to be a fully fledged partner, some opportunities as we go along – April 1st, June 1st, August 1st deadlines to request more funding we asked for additional \$14 million dollars if we don't get it obligated we don't get it – wildlife program – we get additional funding if we have back log,

Roylene: how do we set up this council? Terri has bylaws from Wisconsin meeting. We would like to see resolutions, a council person and a technical person from each tribe. Two items for the group to think about, with sovereignty the tribes will have authority to make the decisions – do you want formal voting or not – should be stated in the bylaws since at some point you will take a formal voting – how do you want to structure yourself? Do you want formal bylaws? You could form council reps and then subcommittees.

Helpful to have the option left open for tribal council members to attend. Tribe usually elects someone that will attend; it was suggested of two members per tribe – a technical person and a council member. Tribal council has the do a lot of different things for the reservation – they have to know about a lot of things, with a resolution supporting the technical person the council will have the right to say “here are the problems we have” If you go with council members you will have a hard time getting meetings scheduled – as a council member I always have a technical person go to meetings with me – I see nothing wrong with that – we need all the input we can get – I trust our technical people.

Terri: In Wisconsin it appeared there was a different culture – they sent council members because they didn’t trust USDA – the technical staff don’t vote – they take the vote to the council.

Roylene: I am really looking forward to this council – we have 8 months before the next hearing regarding the farm bill – would this group like training on the farm bill? One tribe said we are going to have to know more about the farm bill quickly. How often should this group meet? Video conferencing can be utilized – two face-to-face meetings? Meet at ATNI meetings?

Virgil Colville tribal council member: We are going to have to be educated

Roylene: we could definitely do both video conferencing and face to face meetings – we could set up something monthly or every other month, if there is a particular day that works better – our next meeting can be a teleconference – we can set it up for Tuesday or Wednesday – Fridays are not good. Discussion on alternating the face to face meetings from eastside and Westside –the second Tuesday of month will be the date for now – two face to face meetings per year and the rest will be videoconference next meeting via videoconference is May 10th from 9:30 to Noon, we will work on getting a meeting together at ATNI – Next face to face meeting will be at ATNI annual conference September 19-22nd in Tulalip

Membership will be by resolution – tribal council member and technical person
Meetings 2nd Tuesday of the month via videoconference
Next face to face meeting will be at ATNI annual conference Sept. 19-22, 2011

Participants took a break.

Terri reviewed how many participants are going to need their rooms paid for – and go over lunch orders.

Shiraz we want to know what is the major conservation programs that the tribes want to see addressed?

- Tribal conservation districts
- Funding if you are funding folks
- NRCS many using regulations of will talk about this at the May 6th meeting
- Standard’s come up for review every five years – when they are written at the federal level they don’t always include first/traditional foods, we can bring the list for the council to review
- We hope to create a standard here before they go to the federal registry
- Preserving farm land and natural resources
- What monies are available
- Huge funding opportunities available at the federal level tribes only got 0.02% of that funding. One opportunity to have them help you with those proposals

- Develop our land for biofuels
- Land on the reservations we could put to use – make use of land
- Irrigation – be able to waive the irrigation guidelines
- Traditional foods, plants, the tribes are not doing traditional farming/ranching
- Need to put a price on it –
- These issues and the barriers to tribes are the reason we are forming this group
- Alaska corporations worked on subsistence language
- One tribal group in addition to this group – one mechanism we need to create perhaps this group provides oversight to “state group”
- Fishery restoration – some way to get into the fisheries
- Extra funding and working with other agencies is really doable
- This group can provide guidance
- Watershed’s if we can help focus with this group
- Relationship between NRCS and conservation districts –
- Developing aquaculture program and how do you define it
- The wording on disadvantaged vs. underserved
- How flexible is guidelines does it specify on reservation

An area we can explore with the help of your tribal attorney’s and provide the legal documentation, secure conservation under the leadership of the tribe, it’s going to require a lot of work but it absolutely must be done, some of the USDA’s sister agencies don’t understand treaties, that is a discussion if we need to sit with them, USDA has a tribal attorney on retainer, it might not happen as quickly as we would like -

This group can help us build it – and it can be much bigger than just Washington State,

FRRPP Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program – if you have a farm outside Seattle and it’s getting surrounding by urban sprawl you can use this program – can Tribes come in with the money to match and use the FRRPP to protect and preserve? Might be pie in the sky but I would like to look at that

What Colville has done – there is a lot of land that is off reservation NRCS – in Oregon they worked it out where is if it’s on ceded land.

Appreciate the diversity of the tribes and this group,

If the tribes had the opportunities to get technical assistance – could NRCS train the trainers?

Looking at having a training with NRCS that can explain wetlands,

Get a tribe into the system as a technical service provider (TSP) – project by project – Colville was patient enough to wait the year to get them in our system as a TSP. It was difficult with the feds, etc.

David Brown NRCS gave overview of farm bill programs will get us ready for next year’s program. Each year we do a budget review and look at your receipts, etc and make sure it’s working we have a lot of flexibility on what we put into it here at the state level – this is part of what this group can help with so we can get a payment schedule that works for you, we are encouraged through our practice to pay for the project not each multi component.

Tribes have done the work and have the plans-we don't want the funding to go back – we can start focusing on. It would be nice if we could get together the west and east tribes and see what each is doing and USDA can bring examples we might know other agency programs that can help with your projects. We can sit down with you and sometimes there are some things we can do, we can bring Roylene's authority into play we want the field staff at the table but we want to expand on it. David is the most "out of the box" guy you will work with.

Grasslands programs – focused on native grasslands, and some non-native grasslands, rental option that is administered under the FSA.

Farm and ranch land protection program. No tribal program has been done yet, but I don't see any reason why this can't be done – targeted at crop land.

Healthy forest reserve program is not in Washington yet – the funding is so low they have not added additional states

Could change it where each tribe can create their own ranking system we can look at the different options, we need to get into place and we have to get decisions

Agenda items for next teleconference
Ranking sheet/criteria
Send out Wisconsin bylaws
Info on tribal conservation district
Preview on survey assessment
Maybe forming a subcommittee on aquaculture

Will send the link to Washington website with the minutes. We will put the agenda items and the link for the video conferencing in that email.

Stewardship program that's available for forest land – it requires the tribe sign up the entire landbase.

Create group distribution list for this council.

Our goal is to keep the cost as low as we can -

Makah already has a resolution, Roylene asked them to do a cover letter and work through Terri and ATNI

Roylene: Request to send the bylaws from the Wisconsin meeting, what the agency would like to see is a tribal advisory council in each state. Each dept is allowed so many "councils" what the chief proposed instead was to form state councils then region councils, but that is down the road. Wisconsin has had a huge increase in funding to tribes as a result of their council.

Meeting adjourned.