Representatives from seven USDA agencies based in Washington State introduced themselves and briefly described the mission of their agency as part of a listening session held in conjunction with the Affiliated Tribes of NW Indians annual meeting. Following introductions the listening session began. Lastly, the Tribes have requested that USDA do this again at the next ATNI conferences.

Team USDA panel: Dan Fagerlie, WSU Extension; Dennis Koong, NASS; Roylene Rides At The Door, NRCS; Judy Olson, FSA; Jo Lynne Seufer, RM; Mario Villanueva, RD; Terry Clark, APHIS

Please note:

Tribes have requested that we repeat the Team USDA session at the February meeting in Lincoln City, OR.

Comments and questions are as follows:

Comment: Delano Saluskin, Yakama Tribal Council—Feral horse population management is an issue. Help is needed to protect natural resources.

Response: Terry Clark, USDA ANIMAL PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE National Tribal Liaison—Funding is available through Congress to manage feral swine populations. However, funding is not currently available to address the feral horse issue. More work groups are needed.

Response: Katherine Minthorn, Intertribal Agriculture Council – There is active congressional engagement against feral horse management. Katherine acknowledged ANIMAL PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE assistance in hosting working groups on horse management. Resolutions from ATNI and NCAI have been sent to the president and congress requesting action.

Comment: Michael Cardwell, Quinault Nation—Concerned with Tsunami debris introducing invasive species. Will USDA take a role on sea changes and other natural disasters and how they impact natural resources important to tribes such as salmon and shellfish?

Response: Terry Clark, USDA ANIMAL PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE National Tribal Liaison — ANIMAL PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE can address prevention of invasive species for aquaculture.

Response: Dan Fagerlie, WSU Extension Tribal Liaison—Extension, with an ANIMAL PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE PPQ project, can provide educational outreach for various issues, providing training on topics from ID, to rapid response, to invasive management.

Comment: Mitch Pond, Umatilla (CTUIR) Farm Committee—It is good to network in sessions such as this. There is interest in the Farm Bill, especially as it relates to the Indian Land Buyback program. Welcome to CTUIR.
**Comment:** Kathy Rosenmeyer, Quinault Indian Nation—Within the USDA Farm Bill it is a stretch to include forestry management as an ag “crop.” Forests for harvest has similar issues as other types of crops, just are managed as a long-term rotation. The Farm Bill should do a better job of incorporating forest health into its programs.

**Response:** Roylene Rides At The Door, USDA Washington Natural Resources Conservation Service State Conservationist—There are opportunities within the Farm Bill for forest management. Both forestry and aqua culture are relatively new to Farm Bill programs so there is a sense of continued program development. NRCS and other USDA agencies encourage work to happen from the grass roots up to specifically address local needs. If this is not happening let us know what needs to be adjusted. Practices can be added if necessary.

**Response:** Mario Villanueva, USDA Washington Rural Development State Director—Rural Development works on forestry projects through its biomass program. Share your ideas and what you would like to see developed with local staff. If necessary they can run ideas up the chain for implementation. We are constantly adapting to meet needs.

**Comment:** Antone Minthorn, Umatilla—The Umatilla are in the process of developing their natural resource base. The Treaty of 1855 identified original acreage, there was policy to establish farming, tribal members were encouraged to farm. With allotments came the loss of tribal lands. Technical assistance was promised through the BIA. The Umatilla’s began their tribal farm program in the 1960s. Federal agents should help provide technical assistance to develop a farm economy and provide repatriation for economic diversification. Emails were sent to tribal farm program inviting them to participate, where are they?

**Response:** Roylene Rides At The Door, USDA Washington Natural Resources Conservation Service State Conservationist—Noted that each state has a USDA Farm and Agriculture Committee (FAC) comprised of several USDA agencies. She noted she will contact the Oregon FAC to address Antone’s questions. She also noted that USDA has developed what is called StrikeForce, a method for USDA agencies to work together to address challenges to customers by collaborating. USDA agencies in Washington are coming together to develop a similar mechanism for service.

**Comment:** Antone Minthorn—There is a conservation district for the Umatilla’s. The district needs help from USDA.

**Response:** Dan Fagerlie, WSU Extension Tribal Liaison—Assistance is also available through the local extension service.

**Response:** Robin Slate, Natural Resources Conservation Service Washington Tribal Liaison—Introduced Kathy Ferge, NRCS Oregon Tribal Liaison, and encouraged Antone to visit with her after the meeting.
Comment: Ray Smartlowit, Yakama Nation Tribal Council—Attended a similar Round Table in Oregon City for Rural Development block grants. While the intent is to develop self-resiliency for the reservation policies creates barriers—especially collateral requirements. Additionally, there are policy issues between USDA and BIA. All these issues limit tribal access to capital.

Response: Mario Villanueva, USDA Washington Rural Development State Director —Tribes need to work with USDA for problem solving, if we don’t hear about it we can’t fix it. There are times when agencies have to follow regulations, but if barriers can’t be overcome at the local level the conversation needs to take place at the next higher level(s) until resolution can be found. There is a chain of command—issues within the state go directly to state director. If resolution can’t be found at that level the state director elevates it to the national level.

Response: Roylene Rides At The Door, USDA Washington Natural Resources Conservation Service State Conservationist—USDA NRCS is having conversations with BIA to increase discussions on how the agencies can collaborate to better serve tribes. To this end, BIA Regional Superintendent Speaks has attended the Washington Tribal Conservation Advisory Council.

Response: Judy Olson, USDA Washington Farm Service Agency State Executive Director—Acknowledged there are difficulties and sometimes these issues need to be kicked up to the state leadership level for discussion. Most times FSA can work through the issue.

Comment: Doug Minthorn, Vice-chair Tiicham Conservation District—I’m glad to see agriculture here. Umatilla’s are a farming/ranching tribe. I participated in 4-H and FFA, my kids participated in 4-H and FFA. We farmed and ranched, raising cattle and horses. We need to bring more assistance for the children, especially Extension for 4-H.

Response: (See Dan Fagerlie, WSU Extension, response below at closing statement as next comment was given her without time for response at this point.

Comment: Ricky Gabriel, Colville—The federal government has fiduciary responsibilities to tribes because it told us we were required to farm. USDA needs to step up there and meet their responsibilities. Colville does not have an adjudicated water right which is needed for rural economic development. Others benefit from using our resources. We need to be proactive versus reactive. We are political sovereigns not just another stakeholder. We are following up with meetings for use of student loans to encourage our youth. There are roadblocks in BIA policy and how it processes competition from larger producers. Also discussed was the right-of-way approval process that Superintendent Speaks was involved in. There is a pilot project involving a Native American farm business women in which the process took so long that is caused the application to be thrown out because it passed the due date.
Response: Judy Olson, USDA Washington Farm Service Agency State Executive Director—Will work directly with the farmer(s) involved to expedite the process, talk to the BIA and review the appraisal process which may also be a barrier.

Comment: Ricky Gabriel, Colville—work also needs to be done on the feral horse program.

Comment: Antone Minthorn, Umatilla—There is a regional intertribal commerce discussion in which each tribe develops capacity and capability for business processes.

Comment: Henry Cagey, Lummi—Thanks to Rural Development for loan for a tribal center. Invite others to take a look. Took a while to work through the process. It could be expedited—streamlined with more flexibility—it is cumbersome as is.

Response: Mario Villanueva, Washington Rural Development State Director—Henry makes a good point. Rural Development (and other agencies) need to be brought in at the front end of the planning process that is one way to reduce redundancy and they should be included at each stage of the planning process. Wishes the process were less cumbersome, but early involvement should help. Congratulations on the completion of the center.

Comment: Naomi Jacobson, Quileute—The challenged faced by the Quileute is they’ve received 700 acres but there is no support for infrastructure. Currently all tribal buildings are a sea level and are to be moved up to the new property. Assistance is needed—what options are available from USDA. $40 million are needed for planning and development. This move protects the tribe and its buildings from flooding.

Response: Mario Villanueva, USDA Washington Rural Development State Director — RD is glad to have that discussion. It is better to be involved in the planning from the front end with other funding and resource entities, especially projects of a larger scope. Technical assistance is also available. There is a broader issue along the Pacific Coast—a relocation crisis—from natural disasters such as tsunami’s. A larger discussion needs to take place, one that includes congress members.

Comment: Ray Smartlowit, Yakama—Rural Development organization is good at the local level. They visit and there is local USDA representatives either full or part-time, but why is USDA assisting the army in Afghanistan without barriers as to what they can do. The Yakama is a treaty tribe and constitutionally the federal government has an obligation to serve tribes. That should be happening.

Comment: Randy Harris, Quinault—There needs to be a delegation of tribes to work together and move these concerns through the right conduit.

Response: Mario Villanueva, USDA Washington Rural Development State Director — I met with a delegation from Elma, Washington who were ready to discuss programs.
Response: Roylene Rides At The Door, USDA Washington Natural Resources Conservation Service State Conservationist—The State Farm and Agricultural Committee in Washington is using the USDA StrikeForce model to develop a pilot for USDA states without StrikeForce to work together.

Comment: Kathy Rosenmeyer, Quinault—Blessed Robin and Roylene, work with Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) encouraging use of the program. Funding allocations should be based on need. Increased needs of tribes should put tribes in the front of the funding pool, should be a specific percentage set aside for tribes. Sins of the underfunded management of BIA in addressing national resource issues. NOAA funding available to tribe.

Response: Roylene Rides At The Door, USDA Washington Natural Resources Conservation Service State Conservationist—RCPP in the NW region had the highest number of applications for the three funding areas (national, critical conservation area, state). The program is new as of 2014 Farm Bill—partners have been concerned about the amount of work in developing applications versus the amount of funding received and management obligations on the part of the partner. Final rule has not been written, expect it in 2015. Frustration expressed over ranking and rating. Regarding Environmental Quality Incentive Program within Washington there are funds set aside for tribes.

Response: Mario Villanueva, Washington RD State Director—Rural Development have programs with set aside funding for tribes. Frequently funds are focused on rural areas with high incidences of poverty, similar to the USDA StrikeForce Initiative. There are two areas, one on the east side and one on the west for designated funds, one of those will be for a tribe.

Comment: Ken Hall, Umatilla Fish and Wildlife Committee—What does budgeting look like for tribes and how many applications are received from tribes?

Response: Terry Clark, USDA ANIMAL PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE National Tribal Liaison—Animal Plant Health Inspection Service’s focus is to prevent, control, eradicate invasive species, working from the federal listing. Agency is challenged by lack of funding.

Response: Roylene Rides At The Door, USDA Washington Natural Resources Conservation Service State Conservationist—NRCS has multiple contacts with tribes and tribal individuals. Nine active EQIP contracts, Conservation Stewardship Program with Colville’s.

Response: Mario Villanueva, USDA Washington Rural Development State Director —Rural Development has a variety of applications and projects in play for Washington tribes.

Comment: John Cox, Crow Creek Tribe unofficial capacity—Regulations and procedures for USDA programs are developed by nontribal members which increase difficult due to lack of understanding of tribal governance. Crop assistance and crop insurance are not available for traditional tribal foods. Regarding aquatic invasive plants, where does the invasive species list come from?
Response: Terry Clark, USDA ANIMAL PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE National Tribal Liaison -- Regulations are often written without full input from tribes. With his position he is working to bring tribes to the table.

Response: Carl Etsitty, ANIMAL PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE—There is funding for invasive plant control that tribal councils can determine focus. There is not a lot of money. ANIMAL PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE is in the process of trying to build the program for tribes and is increasing outreach. Within Washington there are funds for tribal invasive species through Extension.

Comment: Katherine Minthorn, Intertribal Agriculture Council—Do the regulations address the feral horse issue?

Response: Terry Clark, USDA ANIMAL PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE National Tribal Liaison —The program is limited to prevention of new pests. Congressional funding would be needed to address the horse issue.

Comment: John Cox, Crow Creek Tribe unofficial capacity—There are increased threats by invasive plant species on our tribal native crops like huckleberries and native grasslands. Is insurance available?

Response: Jo Lynne Seufer, Risk Management Agency—RMA crop policies provide protection against natural disasters, drought, flood, hail, etc. and we do cover plant disease, but an insured must take measures to protect their crop. As I shared during my opening remarks, RMA currently insures approximately 28 individual crops throughout the PNW. As for insurance for tribal native crops like huckleberries, in order to re-insure a crop it generally needs to be a cultivated crop to access crop insurance. We do have a Federal Crop Insurance Corporation Board that reviews and considers proposals to re-insure additional crop policy or programs. The Board comprises of producers, one which is a tribal member of the Flathead Tribal Reservation and insurance representatives. The FCIC Board welcomes proposals of new crop policies and inquiries regarding changes to crops covered.

Response: Judy Olson, USDA Washington Farm Service Agency State Executive Director —FSA has a program for crops not insured by Risk Management. The parameters are production is part of a farm setting with cultivation for a commercially viable entity.

Comment: Ron Johnson, Makah—The Makah’s have a long whaling tradition. Over the years the Makah have voluntarily reduced whaling and moved to sealing. Then they voluntarily reduced sealing. They moved to halibut and cod, then adapted to salmon. Now the salmon fleet cannot be serviced locally. The Bolt Fish Wars guaranteed fifty percent of salmon now that is reduced. Tribes are at economic disadvantage due to lack of marine resources. Invasive species can be penned salmon that have broken loose from the pens. Atlantic salmon stock are polluting wild stock.
Response: Judy Olson, USDA Washington Farm Service Agency State Executive Director — clarification FSA is not promoting penned (farmed) salmon as replacement for wild stock, merely addressing the parameters under which FSA funding falls.

Comment: Ron Johnson, Makah—This summer was a disaster for the salmon fleet, due to warm water in traditional fishing area 98 percent of salmon bypassed the fishing grounds. Where does help come from?

Response: Jo Lynne Seufer, USDA Risk Management Agency—RMA does not currently offer crop insurance for wild salmon/wild aquaculture.

Comment: Ray Smartlowit, Yakima Nation Tribal Council—USDA subsidizes big wheat farmers but not fisherman. Policy needs to be changed to help fisherman.

Comment: Henry Cagey, Lummi—Hatcheries are only helpful from a value-added perspective as it is the only left of tribal treaty fishing rights. Now the state of Washington is shutting down hatcheries.

Response: Mario Villanueva, USDA Washington Rural Development State Director — What is the best forum in which to provide solutions to tribes? USDA, Department of Interior and Department of Justice are working to save water and salmon and will be involving stakeholders and sovereigns.

Comment: Ricky Gabriel, Colville—The tribe is in need of infrastructure planning, the city where tribal government is located is surrounded on three sides by water. There are building restrictions due to lack of water, new building codes, water developments can be done everywhere except by tribe. There are transportation issues due to invasive species, regulators are ignoring erosion based losses to roads. There is a need to work to develop a comprehensive management plan. Reminder that within USDA there was litigation to rectify lack of service in past and the tribes won. There are no water (irrigation) system within the tribal lands such as the Columbia Basin Project. While there are good management models available resources need to be available to manage. Interested in funding sources and conversations that happen directly with the tribe.

Comment: Antone Minthorn, Umatilla—USDA is here regarding the Farm Bill and to discuss needs. CTUIR ag committee works with the local agency to make things happen and to build capacity. Tribes have to be at the table to shape the Farm Bill. All tribes have treaties that address technical assistance that should be provided to the tribes. There is policy in the northwest to guide that work. Columbia River Treaty talks are occurring that discussion needs to be elevated. The ATNI Economic Development Committee provides a forum for increasing the level.
Response: Darcy Sexton, FSA Umatilla County Director, noted that the FSA County Committee includes a seat for a representative from the CTUIR area. She encouraged the tribe to make sure they have representation on the County Committee.

Comment: Daryl Williams, Tulalip—Thanked NRCS and RD for their service to Tulalip Tribe. He explained the history of tribal lands and farming in which a significant portion of the property was lost. The tribe is working to buy back tribal lands but most of the land lies fallow the tribe is exploring opportunities. Working in conjunction with Edmonds Community College there are greenhouses, the Cultural Center has a greenhouse, the Health Clinic grows and encourages use of the traditional foods for diabetes control. The farm is used to assist with the drug and alcohol rehabilitation program. There is concern with the closing of the state run salmon and steelhead hatcheries. There may be potential for tribes to pick up operation of the hatcheries if funding can be found. Without the hatcheries there will be no commercial salmon available. There may be funding available from Departments of Commerce and Interior.

Comment: Antone Minthorn, Umatilla—When tribal treaty rights are upheld, as in the case of the Umatilla, everyone wins.

Comment: Henry Cagey, Lummi—The hatchery discussion needs to happen.

Response: Mario Villanueva, USDA Washington Rural Development State Director —Recognized the Tulalip for their collaborative efforts and development of strategic partnerships. The tribe works with the county, environmentalist, farmers, and agencies to move the tribe forward.

Comment: Mitch Pond, Umatilla (CTUIR) Farm Committee—Stressed the importance of programs as tribes look for balance. Often tribes are underfunded and lack opportunities for staff development. He recognized the work of Anthone Minthorn in developing the Umatilla Basin project which provides Umatilla river irrigators with water from the Columbia. He encouraged USDA to conduct a survey of service to Indians especially regarding trust and fiduciary responsibilities, noting adaptive management requires planning and balance.

Comment: Henry Cagey, Lummi—Recommend including USDA listening sessions be conducted as part of the ATNI annual meeting and encouraged USDA to do a better job of sponsoring activities and consulting with tribes.

Response: Dan Fagerlie, USDA WSU Extension, Tribal Liaison, WSU Extension did sponsor a luncheon at ATNI this year and has a large delegation present.
**Comment:** Antone Minthorn, Umatilla—For Farm Bill conversation considering using a trained, neutral facilitator to move the discussion forward.

**Response:** Mario Villanueva, USDA Washington Rural Development State Director —Talking is not enough, the group needs to come up with solutions and keep the conversation moving forward. There needs to be an ability to measure effectiveness, benchmarks with all parties agree upon and hit.

**Comment:** Ray Smartlowit, Yakama Tribal Council—Government-to-government consultation needs to take place. This forum is just a dialog. One size fits all does not work. The question of “how do tribes want to work?” needs to be asked. We are all doing this for our people

**Comment:** Roylene Rides At the Door, USDA Washington Natural Resources Conservation Service State Conservationist—Asked for final comments and or “take aways” from the panel.

**Response:** Judy Olson, USDA Washington Farm Service Agency State Executive Director —Thanked the group for participating and noted she found the listening session format helpful.

**Response:** Mario Villanueva, USDA Washington Rural Development State Director —Acknowledged the issues faced by tribes are as varied as the history of each tribe. If there is a will among the participants another listening session can happen. There needs to be focus and energy.

**Response:** Jo Lynne Seufer, USDA Risk Management Agency—Thank you for your input and RMA recognizes aquaculture is a priority for coastal tribes.

**Response:** Terry Clark, USDA ANIMAL PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE National Tribal Liaison—The agency needs to do a better job of listening and responding to concerns surrounding invasive species.

**Response:** Dan Fagerlie, WSU Extension Tribal Liaison —Concerned with the next generation of tribal farmers, especially with losses of extension agents. Intertribal Agriculture Council has tried to get Congress to fully fund Federally Recognized Tribes Extension Program for many more of the nation’s tribes, but right now it is only partially funded for 36 Tribes in the Nation, and Extension works through 4-H to help build interest in Ag by youth. Tribes need to let their voices be heard on this issue.

**Comment:** Ricky Gabriel, Colville—Thank-you and well-wishes, thanks to the Creator. Finally a reminder there can only be one formal consultation with Congress/President as nation to nation; with agency is government to government.