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Description of document: United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) meeting minutes for the National Food and Agriculture Council (NFAC), 2015

Requested date: 06-February-2017

Released date: 02-March-2017

Posted date: 28-May-2018

Source of document: FOIA Request
Departmental FOIA Officer
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
South Building
Room 4104
Washington, DC 20250-0706
Email: USDAFOIA@ocio.usda.gov

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Rural Development

March 2, 2017

Operations and
Management

1400 Independence
Ave SW
Washington, DC
20250
Voice 202.692.0200
Fax 202.692.0203

Re: FOIA Case No. 2017-RD-02084-F

This is the final response to the request for information submitted on February 6, 2017, to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. § 552. Your request was received in Rural Development (RD) on February 13, 2017. You requested a "copy of the meeting minutes for the National Food and Agriculture Council (NFAC) for meetings during the calendar years 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016."

A search of agency records was conducted to locate the records responsive to your request. RD chaired the NFAC for fiscal year 2015. Therefore, the responsive records for this agency are for this time period only. We have determined that certain information contained therein must be withheld pursuant to Exemptions 5 of the FOIA, 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(5).

Exemption 5, 5 U.S.C. 552(b)(5), the most commonly invoked privilege incorporated within Exemption 5 is the deliberative process privilege, the general purpose of which is to "prevent injury to the quality of agency decisions." This privilege protects the decision-making processes of Government agencies, and protects "advisory opinions, recommendations, and deliberations comprising part of a process by which governmental decisions and policies are formulated." Specifically, three policy purposes consistently have been held to constitute the basis for this privilege: (1) to encourage open, frank discussions on matters of policy between subordinates and supervisors; (2) to protect against premature disclosure of proposed policies before they are finally adopted; and (3) to protect against public confusion that might result from disclosure of reasons and rationales that were not in fact ultimately the grounds for an agency action.

You may contact me by email at Lolita.Ellis@wdc.usda.gov or by phone at (202) 692-0004. As alternative, you can also contact our FOIA Public Liaison, Joseph Shunk, at (202) 692-0032 or by email at Joseph.Shunk@wdc.usda.gov for any further assistance and to discuss any aspect of your request. Additionally, you may contact the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) at the National Archives and Records information for OGIS is as follows: Office of Government Information Services, National Archives and Records Administration, 8601 Adelphi Road-OGIS, College Park, Maryland 20740-6001, e-mail at: ogis@nara.gov; telephone at (202) 741-5770; toll free at: 1-877-684-6448; or facsimile at (202) 741-5769.

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If you are not satisfied with the response to this request, you may administratively appeal by writing to: Administrator, Rural Housing Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Stop 0701, Washington, DC 20250-0701. *Your appeal must be postmarked or electronically transmitted within **90 days** of the date of the response to your request.* The term "FOIA APPEAL" should be placed in capital letters on the front of the envelope.

The FOIA provides you the right to appeal this determination. Any appeal must be made in writing to the Deputy Administrator, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Operations and Management, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Stop 0720, Washington, DC 20250-0720. The appeal must be received within 45 days from the date of this letter. The phrase "FOIA APPEAL" should be placed in capital letters on the front of the envelope.

Rural Development appreciates the opportunity to assist you in this matter.

Sincerely,



Lolita Ellis
Government Information Specialist
FOIA, Privacy Act and Torts Unit

Enclosure

National Food and Agriculture Council

Minutes of Monthly Meeting Held on February 10, 2015

Attendees

- NFAC Chair **Patrice Kunesch** - Deputy Under Secretary, RD
- Administrator, Farm Service Agency **Val Dolcini**
- Chief, Natural Resource Conservation Service **Jason Weller**
- Assistant Secretary for Administration: **Gregory Parham**
- USDA StrikeForce Senior Advisor: **Max Finberg**
- Rural Development: **Matthew Fountain, Terri Sneed, Michael Mathews, Sharon Randolph, Fred Fisher, Lillian Salerno, Sam Ridders**
- Farm Service Agency: **Dana Richey, Rick Pinkston, Mark Rucker, Patrick Spalding**
- Natural Resources and Conservation Service: **Dan Lawson**

Attachments

- Potential NFAC/SFAC Agency Partners draft list
 - FSIS touchdown space sharing pilot program spreadsheet of affected field offices
-

Agenda Item 1 – Proposed 2015 Goals

DUSEC Kunesch described 3 proposed objectives for NFAC and SFACs:

1. Expand interagency collaboration in program delivery and expanded engagement with other partners. See attached draft list of proposed partners.

- DUSEC Kunesch invited feedback on new collaborative opportunities, increased interagency program synergy, and participation of larger pools of partners.
- Administrator Dolcini highlighted the California and Ohio SFACs as collaboration successes.
- Chief Weller proposed a selective, project based, engagement of new partners based on known collaborative co-investment opportunities.

2. Develop a communications information sharing platform

Rural Development is creating a pilot IT platform for NFAC and SFAC information and materials with the goal of improving communications, enhancing collaboration opportunities, and illustrating success stories.

3. Enhance Tribal engagement

DUSEC Kunesch will focus on new collaborative opportunities, including outreach to lending partners, coordination of new funding streams, and expansion of training programs to support USDA employee engagement with tribal communities.

- Chief Weller suggested formalizing the NRCS tribal engagement training course.
- Administrator Dolcini suggested inviting the Office of Tribal Relations to future FAC meetings and engaging with the Council for Native American Farming and Ranching (*POC: Leslie Wheelock*).

- DUSEC Kunesh followed up with a discussion of tribal collaborative opportunities in the Arctic with Native Alaskan tribes (*POC: Bob Jones & Krysta Harden*).

Agenda Item 2 – FSIS Touchdown Space Sharing Pilot

Dana Richey provided details of the tri-agency space survey to identify available space in field offices for FSIS touchdown needs: FSIS identified a need for 72 offices and the three agencies have space available in 70 offices, primarily in conference rooms. Due to high demand and limited availability of this space, coordination must take place well in advance. FSIS has advised they will ensure proper coordination.

Question of NFAC: Whether to proceed with a pilot of 3-4 months, with an assessment and a recommendation on continuation near the end of the pilot period.

Response: No objections to proceeding with the pilot, but with consideration of the following:

- Ensure good coordination of mutual space by all parties
- Security, emergency access, and a daily access coordination process. For security purposes, it is important for host agency offices to identify the presence and schedule of all visitors.
- Develop simple and efficient system/process for arranging and tracking touchdowns

Matt Fountain and Abeni Ogun/FSIS are joint leads for the pilot program task force, with support from Dan Lawson and Dana Richey. The task force will provide a proposal for NFAC consideration at the meeting in March.

Agenda Item 3 – Leasing Center of Excellence Presentation

Assistant Secretary Dr. Parham:

- Phase 1 of the CoE action plan: 241 incomplete actions and 22 “hold-overs” with a March 31, 2015 deadline to clear these actions.
- GSA possesses half the portfolio and has administrative oversight on our leasing operations. Expressed concern about avoiding delays and managing the leasing portfolio.
- FY 2015 broker services are to develop a more evenly distributed portfolio between field-based lease management and centralized lease acquisition. Agencies are required to provide information to broker services in order to capitalize on resources, execute tasks, and complete the initiative.

Further highlights:

- CoE may be formalized in March 2015, subject to delays due to Congressional notification requirements
- We may be incorporating a more integrated lease management system with GSA
- Many 2014 leases were extended for one year so we need close coordination to transition to longer term leases
- Strategic sourcing initiative implementation has no cost to the agencies and will provide substantial savings
- Potential vectors for reprogramming strategic sourcing savings by the most efficient means so that funds can be redistributed and used prior to the end of FY 2015

Agenda Item 4 – StrikeForce Update

RD’s Rural Business Cooperative Service Administrator Lillian Salerno presented a framework using RD’s Community Economic Development (CED) structure to institutionalize StrikeForce through field offices and CED coordinators.

Further highlights:

- Administrator Salerno will focus on using the NRCS model to imbed StrikeForce initiatives with field staff
- StrikeForce expansion: Oklahoma and Puerto Rico to become the next StrikeForce designations, with two other states under consideration
- Max Finberg shared an interagency collaboration success story about Duck Valley, Nevada

Meeting adjourned

DUSEC Kunesh reiterated her enthusiasm for our 2015 outlook and extended an open invitation to member feedback.

National Food and Agriculture Council

Minutes of 2nd Quarter Meeting Held on June 25, 2015

Opening Remarks

Acting NFAC Chair, RD Deputy Administrator Operations and Management (DAOM) - Edna Primrose

DAOM Primrose explained that DUSEC Kunesh stepped down as NFAC Chair after accepting a position as Assistant Vice President with the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis. Acting DUSEC Vernita Dore will be replacing DUSEC Kunesh as the NFAC Chair.

Agenda Item 1 – Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) Outreach

Rural Business Cooperative Service, Deputy Administrator - Sam Ridders

Deputy Administrator Ridders thanked the Council members for their assistance in exceeding REAP grant delivery expectations, resulting in FY 15 REAP grants oversubscribed as a whole. DA Ridders also described improved geographic distribution of the REAP grant portfolio. Loan guarantees will continue to be an area of emphasis for the REAP program and DA Ridders requested assistance from the NFAC in improving the guaranteed portfolio obligation numbers in FY 16. Particular areas of success in the REAP Guaranteed portfolio have been projects involving solar farming and anaerobic digesters.

- FSA POC - Gregory Diephouse
- NRCS POC - Jacqueline Davis-Slay

Agenda Item 2 – Tribal Relations

Forest Service (FS), Director, Office of Tribal Relations (OTR) - Fred Clark

Director Clark gave a brief description of the history of FS tribal relations, and collaborative efforts led by FS in Indian Country. He then expanded on the FS OTR mission by explaining the current and future objectives for the Forest Service in Indian Country, followed by an open invitation to all Council agencies to consult with his office and share tools and best practices. (*presentation attached*)

Also available at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/tribalrelations>

Further highlights:

- FS recently published
 - Tribal Guide to FS Grants and Agreements
 - FS Tribal Research Roadmap
 - Indian Forest Management Assessment Team (IFMAT) Report
 - Web Based - USDA Employee Tribal Relations Training (mandatory soon)
- Coming soon from FS
 - Tribal Connections GIS Map Service
 - The History of Relations between Tribes and the Forest Service
 - USDA Tribal Consultation Reporting Database
 - Sacred Sites Webinars

USDA, Director, Office of Tribal Relations - Leslie Wheelock

Director Wheelock explained that the USDA Office of Tribal Relations was established by the President in 2008 to be the first point of contact for all things tribal. She explained that one of the most important goals of USDA OTR going forward will be to continue integrating USDA, DOE, DOD, HUD, DOI, and Treasury programs to improve Tribal access and reduce disparate communications in program outreach efforts.

Director Wheelock described the primary work of USDA OTR as the following categories:

- Litigation Teams – Focused on intervention and assistance in US to tribal government relations
- Outreach – Focused on bringing technical and informational resources to Indian Country
- In-reach – Focused on providing in-house consultative services to USDA employees engaged in Tribal relations activities

Agenda Item 3 – Leasing Center of Excellence Update

Assistant Secretary for Administration - Dr. Gregory Parham

Assistant Secretary Parham commended the efforts of the Council members for their contributions in reducing the backlog of over 1,200 leases in holdover status by 99%. In fact, leasing efforts have been so efficient that the FY 16 expenditure for broker services is projected to decrease by over 60% from FY 15 levels, from \$4 Mil to \$1.5 Mil. Dr. Parham highlighted that significant work lies ahead and explained that the majority of leases were cleared from holdover through 1 year extensions which are now coming due.

Dr. Parham also explained that only 95 days remain until the end of the fiscal year. This is historically when the USDA spends approximately 40% of its total administrative funding, and there is opportunity for significant savings this year if ASA guidance to support the USDA Strategic Sourcing Initiative is effectively implemented. The current areas of focus under the Initiative are Information Technology, Property, Laboratories, and Fleet Management expenditures.

Agenda Item 4 – StrikeForce Update

USDA StrikeForce Senior Advisor - Max Finberg

Senior Advisor Finberg provided a brief update on progress toward meeting FY15 StrikeForce goals and Key Performance Indicators (KPI) (*whiteboard attached*).

Mr. Finberg then explained that OBPA is required to present the Secretary with completed Agency Priority Goals no later than July 15, 2015. One of those goals is a combined agency goal for StrikeForce investments. (*goal presentation attached*) Mr. Finberg requested that:

- The agencies examine and determine recommendations for the Language, Metrics, and Target Numbers for the goal and submit their decision to the NFAC principals by no later than July 8, 2015.
- The Council will formally record the NFAC decision for the goal framework and targets and submit the decision to OBPA no later than July 10, 2015.

Mr. Finberg provided the Council with a target goal planning tool (attached .xls spreadsheet) and asked that the agency StrikeForce POCs work collaboratively in the coming days to prepare our NFAC response to OBPA.

POCs:

StrikeForce Lead, RBCS Administrator – Lillian Salerno

RD – Sam Ridders, Bryan Zulko,

FSA – Latrice Hill

NRCS – Natasha Brown

Agenda Item 5 – USDA Office of the Ombudsperson

USDA Ombudsperson - Joanne Dea

Ms. Dea announced the launch of the USDA Office of the Ombudsperson and explained the role of the office in USDA operations. (*informational materials attached*)

Further highlights:

- Serve as an independent, neutral, confidential and informal resource for Native American producers.
- Advocate within the USDA for change where the process and supporting data and information demonstrate such a need.
- Promote the use of alternative dispute resolution techniques and the early resolution of issues and concerns.
- Not advocate for individuals, groups or entities or take sides in an issue or advocate for an outcome.

For more information visit: <http://www.usda.gov/ombudsperson>

Meeting Adjourned

With no further issues to address, DAOM Primrose adjourned the meeting

Attendees

- Acting NFAC Chair **Edna Primrose** - Deputy Administrator Operations and Management, RD
- Deputy Administrator, Farm Service Agency: **Chris Beyerhelm** *for Val Dolcini*
- Chief, Natural Resources Conservation Service: **Dan Lawson** *for Jason Weller*
- Assistant Secretary for Administration: **Gregory Parham**
- USDA Director of Tribal Relations: **Leslie Wheelock**
- USDA Office of Communications: **Matthew Herrick**
- USDA Ombudsperson: **Joanne Dea**
- Director OPPM: **Lisa Wilusz**
- USDA CIO: **Joyce Hunter**
- OBPA: **Winta Tewolde**
- AMS Administrator: **Anne Alonzo**
- ARS Administrator: **Gary May** *for Chavonda Jacobs-Young*
- ERS Administrator: **Marca Weinberg** *for Mary Bohman*
- FAS Administrator: **Bryce Quick** *for Phil Karsting*
- FNS Administrator: **Tony Craddock** *for Audrey Rowe*
- FS Administrator: **Bryan Rice** *for Andrea Bedell-Loucks*
- NASS Administrator: **Gregory Preston** *for Joe Reilly*
- RMA Administrator: **Tim Gannon** *for Brandon Willis*
- USDA StrikeForce Senior Advisor: **Max Finberg**
- Rural Development: **Matthew Fountain, Gary Bojes, Bryan Zulko, Sam Ridders**
- Farm Service Agency: **Rick Pinkston, Latrice Hill**
- Natural Resources Conservation Service: **Dan Lawson, Jeff Zimprich**
- Forest Service: **Fred Clark**

Attachments

- Addendum A: Meeting Agenda
- Addendum B: FS Tribal Relations Presentation
- Addendum C: StrikeForce White Board
- Addendum D: FY 16-17 StrikeForce Agency Priority Goal Presentation
- Addendum E: Office of the Ombudsperson Informational Materials
- Addendum F: FY 16-17 StrikeForce goal planning tool (*as a separate .xls file*)

AGENDA

National Food and Agriculture Council

USDA HQ

1400 Independence Ave., SW,

Whitten Bldg., Room 108A

Washington, D.C. 20250

To join by telephone:

Phone Number: 800-981-3173

Access Code: 5174#, option2

June 25, 2015

1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Vernita Dore, NFAC 2015 Chairperson

2015 NFAC Goals

Enhance agency partnerships

Enhance our communication

Enhance our tribal impact

1:00 p.m.	Introductions	
1:05 p.m.	Rural Energy for America Program update	Sam Ridders
1:10 p.m.	Native American Outreach <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Office of Tribal Relations<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ NAFAR○ Other Collaboration Opportunities• Forest Service Outreach<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Overview○ Collaboration Opportunities	Leslie Wheelock Fred Clark
1:20 p.m.	Leasing COE Update	Dr. Parham
1:30 p.m.	StrikeForce <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Update• FY 16 & 17 Agency Priority Goal• How can the other agencies get involved?	Max Finberg
1:55 p.m.	Office of the Ombudsperson Launch Update	Joanne Dea
2:00 p.m.	Closing Remarks	



USDA Forest Service Tribal Relations Update

Fred P. Clark
Director, Office of Tribal Relations

National Food and Agriculture Council
June 25, 2015



Collaborative Stewardship in Natural and Cultural Resources

Create resilient ecosystems through on-the-ground, community-based projects.

Collaboration that builds commitment to partnership and ownership of the results.

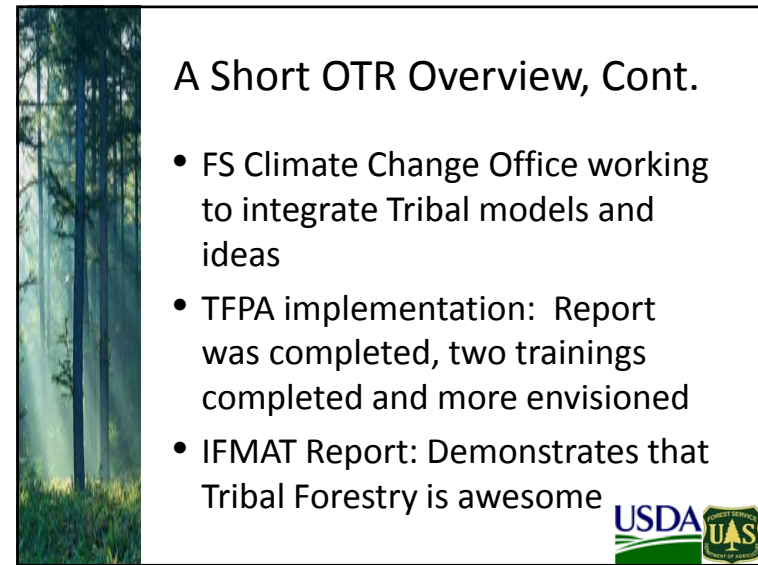
Find common interests and leverage resources to get work done.




A Short OTR Overview


(Not including regional/local actions)

- Available for consultation with a Forest near you: FS Tribal Relations Directives.
- Recently published:
 - Tribal Guide to FS Grants and Agreements
 - FS Tribal Research Roadmap
- Available soon: *Tribal Connections* GIS Map Service

A Short OTR Overview, Cont.

- FS Climate Change Office working to integrate Tribal models and ideas
- TFPA implementation: Report was completed, two trainings completed and more envisioned
- IFMAT Report: Demonstrates that Tribal Forestry is awesome



A Short OTR Overview, Cont.

- Soon to be published: History of Relations between Tribes and the Forest Service
- In final stages: Technical guide for reburial, closures, confidentiality, and other topics



A Short OTR Overview, Cont.

- In pilot testing: USDA tribal consultation reporting database
- Web-based training on tribal relations now on line for USDA employees: soon to be mandatory
- Helping other agencies with training: NRC, COE, FSIS, TVA



Things to Keep Your Eyes On

- Forest Plan Revisions
 - Consultation requirements, TEK and Sacred Sites
- Climate Change Hubs
 - Centers of activities around adaptation with DOI, FS R&D, and the CC Office
- New Communications Tools
 - Blogs, Webinars, Web Site enhancements



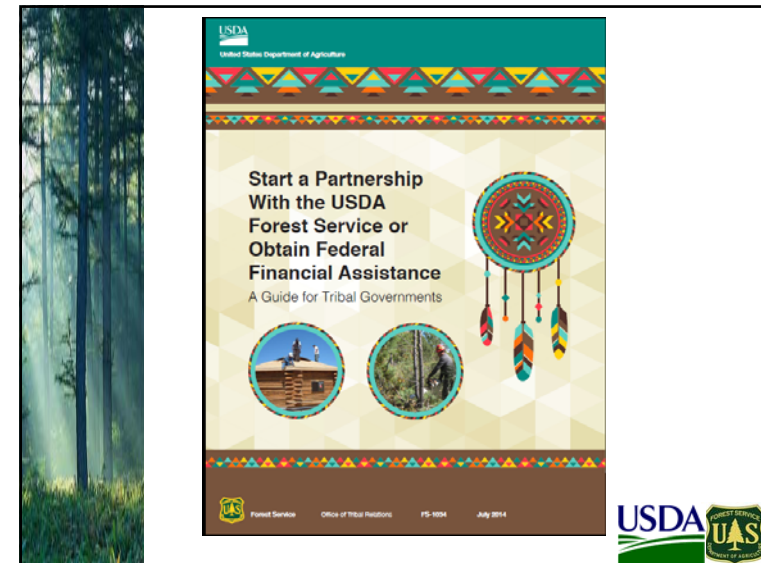
More Details on a Few Items

- Tribal Relations Directives
 - Available for Tribal Consultation since May of 2013
 - Expected to be published soon for a 60-day public comment period
 - Tribal Consultation and Public Comment to end simultaneously
 - After adjustment in response to consultation and comments, will be published as final



More Details on a Few Items

- Tribal Guide to FS Grants and Agreements



All or part of every national forest and grassland is carved out of the ancestral lands of American Indian and Alaska Native peoples. Indigenous communities across the country still maintain strong historical and spiritual connections to the land, connections that have not been extinguished despite changes in land ownership.

Deputy Chief Leslie Weldon, National Forest System

Tribal Connections Interactive Mapping Tool: 4,000 Miles of Connection





UNDERSTANDING THE WHY

- Improve decision-making for incident and resource management
- Uphold treaty and trust responsibilities
- Define the scope of tribal needs and interests on Forest Service lands
- Identify cooperative opportunities

FOREST SERVICE LAYER

- Administrative boundaries created from agency data
- Lands shown are administered and owned by the agency



TRIBAL LANDS LAYER

- U.S. Census 2012 TIGER files
- Indian Lands Federally recognized as legal American Indian Areas and American Indian Joint – Use areas
- 566 federally-recognized tribes
- 56.2 million acres tribal land held in trust.



CEDED LANDS LAYER

Land ceded, or surrendered, by the tribes to the Federal government as part of a treaty.



ROYCE MAPS



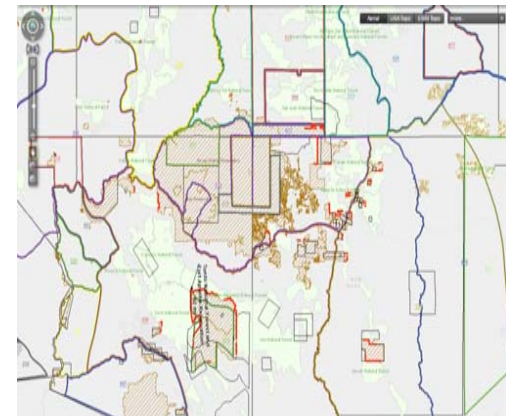
WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

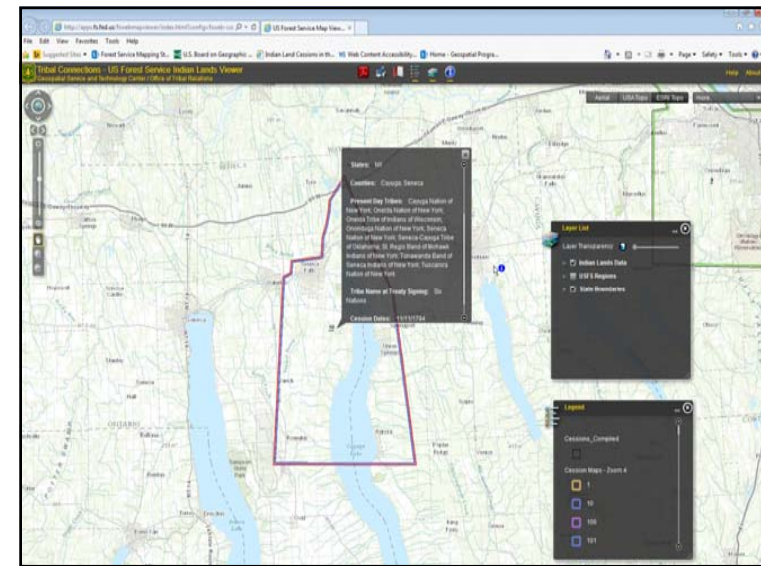
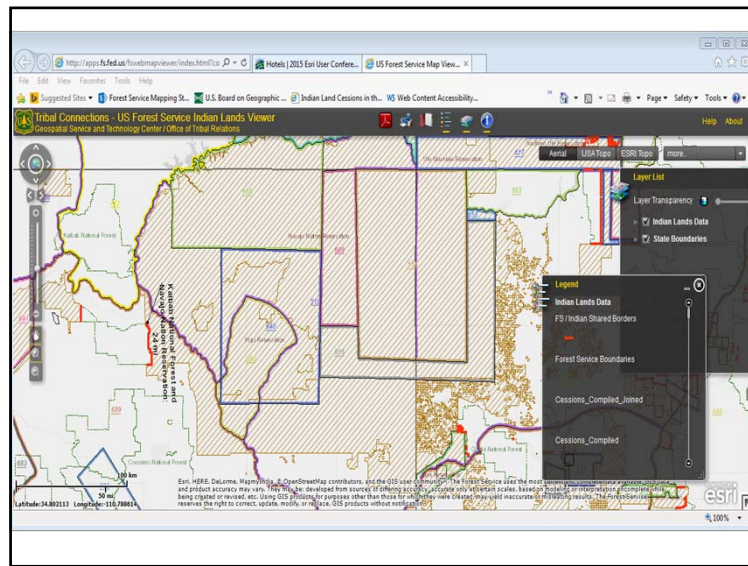
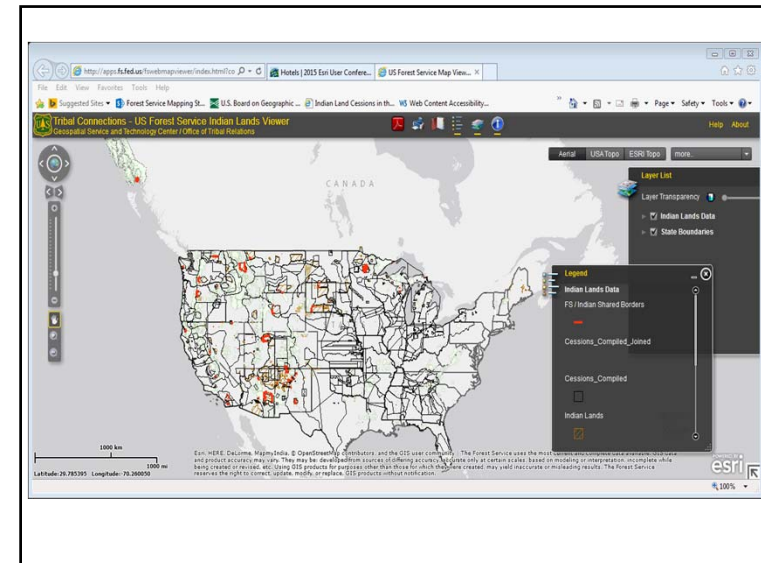
- Many ceded lands overlap National Forest System lands
- Current tribal members retain cultural/historical rights to these lands
- Tribal consultation should include tribes represented in ceded lands and nearby tribal lands

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER



COMBINED OVERLAYS





POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Tribal Connections should be used as a reference point for informational purposes only
- This is not a legal map
- The map as shown fulfills the need of the Office of Tribal Relations
- The map is interactive so it can work for you
- The map is scheduled for public release in 2015

Sacred Sites Update

Keeping ITC Tribes Up to Date

- The Secretary of Agriculture asked for:
 - A review of existing laws, regulations, and policies on Sacred Sites
 - Consultation with Tribal leaders
 - A final report and recommendations on Sacred Sites policies and procedures
- He got it and accepted the recommendations at the end of 2012

NOW WHAT?



Sacred Sites: Update, Cont.

- Implementing for long-term with shorter term benchmarks/actions
- Executive Team Oversight and Guidance – Top Agency Leaders
- Core Team Workers – Excellent group from across the agency vertically and horizontally



Sacred Sites: Update, Cont.

- Three sub-teams of the Core Team are addressing key recommendations from these themes:
 - Communications
 - Policy and Guidance
 - On-the-Ground Action
- These are now being combined into a single strategy with short and long term actions identified



Sacred Sites: Update, Cont.












- The initial framework suggests some key focus areas:
 - Reflect sacred sites protection and access in the directives system
 - Make available and require certain levels of training for FS personnel
 - Involve Tribal partners and expertise wherever and whenever possible



Sacred Sites: Update, Cont.

- We are
 - Conducting webinars within each Region
 - Contracting for facilitated Learning
 - Engaging in on-the-ground mutual learning experiences
 - Creating a mentoring program



<div></div> <div>Helping to build long-term collaborative partnerships with Tribes</div>				Awakening and Strengthening People's Connections to Sacred Sites	
SACRED SITES REPORT IMPLEMENTATION TRACKING – As of 06/11/15					
Sacred Sites Team: Program Managers: Fred Clark and Ericka Luna Executive Team: Jim Hubbard, Leslie Weldon, Patti Hiram, Mary Beth Borst, Barney Gyant, Becki Heath, Rob Harper Core Team: Fred Clark, Craig Bobzien, Bob Goodwin, Larry Heady, Susan Johnson, Mike Kaczor, Kevin Martin, Dan Meza, Lillian Petershoare, William Reed, Ian Ritchie, Cecilia Seesholtz, Earl Stewart, Craig Trulock, Norm Wagoner, Waldo Walker, Cheryl Vanderburg				Strategic Goal: To accomplish implementation of the Report's recommendations. Implementation is structured around three distinctive themes reflected in the Report; communications/relationships; direction/policy; and on-the-ground actions.	
Project Update					
Major Objectives/Outcomes:		Status	End Date	% Complete	Achievements (last 30 days): <ul style="list-style-type: none">- FLEs: Request for Proposals Published- Project Manager transition underway- Tracking sheets developed- ITC briefed- Effort included in EI Conference presentation- Additional Adobe Connect Training completed- R2 webinar completed (#2 in series)
Facilitated Learning Engagements			2015	10%	Next Steps (next 30 days): <ul style="list-style-type: none">- SS webinar- Webinar schedule updated- Adobe Connect training- Core Team reviews<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Mentoring Guide- CHCA Technical Guide- Advertise Program Manager position- Write up Community of Practice proposal- Write up TBAG Model
Webinar Kickoff			4/06/2015	50%	
Regional Webinar Series			10/31/2015	20%	
Mentoring Program			FY2015	20%	
On-the-Ground Engagements			FY2016	0%	
Challenges: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Transition in Project Manager responsibilities may cause some static in the system- Scheduling for On-the-Ground Mutual Learning Engagements has depended on timing of Senior Fire Leaders meetings, which have been cancelled or preempted.					
<div> Planning, no action taken</div> <div> Action started</div> <div> On/Ahead of Schedule</div> <div> Complete</div>					

Sacred Sites: Update

Interagency SS MOU

- Five subgroups are addressing these areas, with lead agencies:
 - Training (Defense)
 - Confidentiality Standards (Interior)
 - Management Practices and Capacity Building (Agriculture)
 - Public Outreach and Communications (Energy)
 - Policy Review (ACHP)





USFS Tribal Relations Update

Collaborative Stewardship in
Natural and Cultural Resources

Washington, DC - June 25, 2015



Secretary Priorities – StrikeForce for Rural Growth and Opportunity (SF) – as of 04/31/15

Agency: Department-Wide

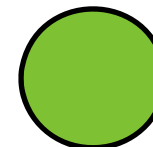
POC: Max Finberg, Senior Advisor to Assistant Secretary for Administration

Partners/Stakeholders: Federal agencies, public and private entities, local and state governments, and Tribal reservations

Goal Category: *Rural Opportunity*

Strategic Objective: To leverage resources and increase USDA program access and investments in rural, persistent poverty communities. This is accomplished through collaborations and partnerships with other federal agencies, public and private entities, local and state governments, Tribal reservations.

Overall:



Project End date:
12/31/2015

Project Update

Major Milestones/Outcomes/Deliverables:	Start Date	End Date	% Complete
1. Create, save or retain 7,875 jobs in StrikeForce areas. (RD)	01/01/2015	12/31/2015	19%
2. Make 18,200 program investments in SF areas that will lead to the creation and/or retention of businesses, entrepreneurship, cooperatives, and agricultural industries.	01/01/2015	12/31/2015	106%
3. Obtain 27,000 applications for USDA funding from producers in SF areas. (NRCS & FSA)	01/01/2015	12/31/2015	202%
4. Increase the number of historically underserved producers that receive USDA funding in SF areas by 10% over FY 2014. (FSA)	01/01/2015	12/31/2015	64%
5. Create 7 new interagency and public-private partnerships that leverage funding in SF areas.	01/01/2015	12/31/2015	71%

Challenges:

Coordinating activities for the RD Cooperative Agreements and NRCS, OASCR and Endowment Cooperative Agreements to ensure that all objectives and outcomes are delivered.

Organizing and training new coordinators and team leads in the states.

Achievements (FY 2015):

- More than 1,511 jobs created, saved or retained in StrikeForce (SF) counties as of March 2015 through RD's Rural Business Service Programs.
- 76,131 homeowners and tenants served through RD's Multi Housing Programs.
- RD's loans, grants and combos increased by 91% in the second quarter, from 6,003 to 11,465 Dollars obligated increased by 111%, from \$758,164,929 to \$1,600,025,754.
- FSA total loans increased by 76%, from Feb. to Mar. 2,944 to 4,863. Total obligation increased by 64%, from Feb. to Mar. Seventy-two percent of loans were made to socially disadvantaged and beginning farmers and ranchers (SDA/BF) and 62% of the dollars obligated were to SDA/BF. Sixty-six percent of total and 64% of SDA/BF applications were approved. [Increases include OK and PR county data]
- As of April 2015, NRCS applications increased by 163% from FY 2014. Contracts and obligations are 28% and 22% of FY 2014, respectively.
- Elvis Cordova and others traveled to Puerto Rico to amplify the expansion of SF in the Commonwealth. The First Lady and Secretary of Agriculture of Puerto Rico joined the press conference at a farm that receives assistance from FSA, NRCS and RD, while selling produce to local schools thanks to FNS. The First Lady and Secretary also hosted an Earth Day event at the Governor's Mansion with NRCS to plant a People's Garden and expand them across the island. OK events were last month.
- A StrikeForce team met with United Tribes Technical College in Bismarck and Cankdeska Cicana Tribal College in Ft. Totten, ND. Dr. Bartuska wasn't able to attend due to flight cancellations.
- Twenty-one states and Puerto Rico, encompassing 880 counties and parishes, are now designated and receiving 'intensive care' treatment through the initiative.

Next Steps (next 30 days):

- Schedule subcabinet travel and activities to SF states (ongoing).
- Assist Office of Communications in development of two new SF videos.



Significant Delays (>30 days or work stop)



Minor Delays (<30 days)



On/Ahead of Schedule



Complete

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Office of the Ombudsperson

The Ombudsperson can...

- ✓ Identify issues early and highlight broader concerns on access to USDA programs.
- ✓ Review information and data to search for patterns and ongoing trends on access to USDA programs.
- ✓ Listen to concerns from farmers and ranchers.
- ✓ Refer issues to other USDA resources and offices.
- ✓ Communicate shared concerns from Native American farmers and ranchers to senior USDA leaders.
- ✓ Make recommendations to resolve problems and issues.
- ✓ Advocate for fair process and administration for all the involved individuals.
- ✓ Seek internal organizational change as appropriate.

The Ombudsperson cannot...

- X Advocate for any one individual or group or entity or for an outcome.
- X Make, change or set aside a law, policy, operational or administrative decision.
- X Compel anyone to implement the Ombudsperson's recommendations.
- X Process civil rights complaints.
- X Conduct formal investigations or adjudicate complaints, or accept an issue that is currently pending in legal or administrative channels.
- X Act as a substitute for formal channels or participate in formal proceedings or overturn any final decisions.
- X Accept claims or notice of claims on behalf of the USDA.
- X Provide legal advice or determine rights.
- X Testify or serve as a witness on matters brought to the Ombudsperson in any formal process or matter, unless required by law.
- X Address internal human resources matters, union matters, workplace issues or individual Equal Employment Opportunity complaints.

National Food and Agriculture Council

Minutes of NFAC May Meeting Held on May 22, 2015

Agenda Item 1 – FSIS Space Sharing Update

Rural Development NFAC Liaison – Matthew Fountain

Mr. Fountain provided an update on the FSIS Space Sharing Pilot Study, explained that the Texas SFAC approved the request for the pilot on April 16, 2015, and that no FSIS space sharing activity has taken place since that approval. The FSIS request to extend the pilot program to Wisconsin was brought to the NFAC for consideration. The NFAC Principals approved the FSIS request to continue the pilot in Wisconsin.

Agenda Item 2 – RD West Virginia Office Reclassification

Rural Development NFAC Liaison – Matthew Fountain

Mr. Fountain presented an action for office reclassification in West Virginia to the NFAC principals for their consideration. The principals briefly discussed the office action.

Further highlights:

- Of the two offices effected (Elkins & Beckley) FSA & NRCS are only collocated in the Beckley WV area office
- No FSA or NRCS employees will be effected
- No costs incurred

Agenda Item 3 – Strike Force & Promise Zone Update

USDA StrikeForce Senior Advisor: Max Finberg & Rural Development – Sam Ridders

Mr. Finberg shared the continuing vision for sustainment and expansion of StrikeForce areas, explained the parallels between the 2015 NFAC goals and the StrikeForce initiative, and highlighted how well StrikeForce helps accomplish those goals. Mr. Finberg then explained the details of Promise Zones and the future plan for this initiative.

- Promise Zones
 - Are a 10 year designation
 - Provide for a contingent of up to 5 AmeriCorps and/or Vista volunteers
 - Provide priority points for up to 9 programs

Agenda Item 4 – Leasing & Strategic Sourcing Update

Assistant Secretary for Administration – Dr. Gregory Parham

Dr. Parham began the presentation by explaining that the next step to establishing the Leasing Center of Excellence (COE) is Congressional notification and Governance board meetings with the unions.

- Establishment of the COE
- Leasing Regionalization

Dr. Parham also presented pre-decisional information on strategic sourcing of the USDA fleet.

- Fleet metrics
 - The 4 primary fleet agencies are: ARS, APHIS, FS, & NRCS
 - The total fleet is over 40,000 vehicles
 - USDA will recover up to \$200mil by turning over our owned fleet to GSA and pursuing a lease this fiscal year.

Meeting Adjourned

DUSEC Kunesh adjourned the meeting

Attendees

- NFAC Chair: **Patrice Kunesh** - Deputy Under Secretary, RD
- Administrator, Farm Service Agency: **Val Dolcini**
- Chief, Natural Resources Conservation Service: **Jason Weller**
- Assistant Secretary for Administration: **Gregory Parham**
- Assistant Administrator for FSA: **Chris Beyerhelm**
- USDA StrikeForce Senior Advisor: **Max Finberg**
- Rural Development: **Matthew Fountain, Sam Ridders**
- Farm Service Agency: **Dana Richey, Rick Pinkston, Zeke Dennison**
- Natural Resources Conservation Service: **Dan Lawson**

Attachments

- Addendum A: Meeting Agenda
- Addendum B: Texas SFAC approved FSIS Space Sharing proposal
- Addendum C: StrikeForce Reference Guide (January 2015)
- Addendum D: Fleet Executive Summary

AGENDA

National Food and Agriculture Council

USDA HQ

1400 Independence Ave., SW,

Whitten Bldg., Room 205W

Washington, D.C. 20250

May 22, 2015

9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

Patrice Kunesch, NFAC 2015 Chair

To join by telephone:

Phone Number: 800-981-3173

Access Code: 5174 #, option2

2015 NFAC Goals

Enhance agency partnerships

Enhance our communication

Enhance our tribal impact

9:00 a.m.	Call to Order	
9:10 a.m.	FSIS Space Sharing <ul style="list-style-type: none">Pilot Update – Texas Lessons LearnedNext Steps – Expand pilot to WisconsinDiscussion	Matt Fountain
9:20 a.m.	RD West Virginia Area office reclassification	Matt Fountain
9:30 a.m.	Leasing Update	Dr. Parham
9:45 a.m.	StrikeForce Update <ul style="list-style-type: none">Puerto Rico and Oklahoma expansion	Max Finberg Sam Ridders
9:50 a.m.	Closing Remarks	

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Executive Summary: Fleet

- Project team has developed a detailed USDA fleet category profile (\$213M in annual spend) and identified key levers to achieve savings
- We believe there is a savings opportunity within USDA fleet – while fulfilling individual agency missions – by utilizing 3 strategies
 - Acquiring vehicles through the best channel
 - Maintaining the right fleet size
 - Harmonizing vehicle specifications
- We estimate a recurring benefit of \$32-40M by acquiring vehicles through the best channel, with an additional opportunity of repurposing \$200-220M in capital

National Food and Agriculture Council
Minutes
August 20, 2015

Opening Remarks

NFAC Chair, RD Deputy Under Secretary – Vernita Dore

DUSEC Dore hosted introductions and began the meeting by thanking all members for their commitment and efforts to our successful 2015 NFAC.

Agenda Item 1 – FY 16 & 17 Combined Agency Priority StrikeForce Goal

USDA StrikeForce Senior Advisor - Max Finberg

Mr. Finberg shared a brief background on the history of StrikeForce and explained the need for the goals presented to NFAC. Mr. Finberg provided an overview of the proposed goal (*attached*) and explained that the goal has been vetted through the agencies, the Department, and is now under review at the Office of Management and Budget.

The NFAC concurred with the goal language with the exception of one modification to distinguish between the target areas in the first and second sub-goals; Sub-Goal #1 – Investments in designated StrikeForce areas; Sub-Goal #2 – Leveraged investments in high poverty areas.

Further highlights:

- Two part goal
 - 10% increase in the combined FY 16 & 17 years for investments in StrikeForce areas when compared to the FY 09 baseline.
 - \$1 Billion in leveraged investments for the combined FY 16 & 17 years in **StrikeForce and other** designated high poverty areas.

Agenda Item 2 – FSIS Space Sharing Pilot

NFAC Liaison – Matt Fountain

Mr. Fountain explained that the FSIS Space Sharing Pilot proposed over one year ago, represented a combined effort to share space among the three Service Center Agencies and FSIS. At that time the NFAC principals directed that the effort begin with a small scale pilot, due for expansion after success could be demonstrated on an incremental basis. Texas became the first approved State for the pilot on April 16, 2015, and has not seen activity to date. Likewise, on July 15, 2015, Wisconsin was added to the pilot and has seen no activity. Mr. Fountain proposed to the NFAC principals that the pilot remain in Texas and Wisconsin without further expansion, until some measurable activity can occur among those States.

The NFAC principals and their appointed representatives agreed to suspend expansion of the pilot until success could be demonstrated among the current pilot states.

Agenda Item 3 – Feds Feed Families Initiative

USDA Feds Feed Families Lead – Greg Pompelli (by Phone)

Mr. Pompelli provided an overview of the Feds Feed Families program history and goals for 2015. Mr. Pompelli applauded the Field Offices for their great deal of interest and motivation in supporting the program. He went on to say that the Department will publish a full schedule of sponsored activities including: gleaning, competitions, and fundraisers at the Agency, Department, and National level.

Further highlights:

- Departmental guidance has been issued authorizing supervisors to grant administrative leave to volunteers for their participation in Feds Feed Families activities.
- Gleaning activities may be scheduled directly with the Society of St. Andrew <http://endhunger.org/> or Agencies may take advantage of prescheduled USDA gleaning activities.

The NFAC principals and their representatives volunteered unanimous support for the Feds Feed Families initiative and commissioned the creation of a jointly signed letter to all SFAC chairs to request their full support in meeting the 2015 Feds Feed Families goals.

POCs:

2015 Feds Feed Families National Program Manager – Jennifer McDowell

USDA Feds Feed Families Lead – Greg Pompelli

RD Chair – Matthew Fountain

Agenda Item 4 – NFAC Subcommittee for the USDA Leasing Center of Excellence

DM ASA, Senior Policy Advisor – Chris Nelson

Mr. Nelson described the collaborative effort that the Department has undertaken to reduce our lease backlog of over 1,200 leases in holdover status by 90%. In an effort to prevent such a backlog from occurring in the future, the Leasing Center of Excellence (COE) formed a working group to establish an oversight committee for the operations of the Leasing COE. The group has proposed that:

- The Service Center agencies retain their current acquisition functions
- The NFAC establish a Subcommittee on leasing
 - Comprised of Agency leadership from the three Service Center Agencies
 - Reports regularly to NFAC on leasing matters
 - Represents a core group that can provide oversight and governance on leasing policy
 - Prioritize use and balance of resources
 - Address holdover leases
 - Resolve escalation issues
 - Ensure quality customer service and continuous process improvements
 - Enable re-allocation of resources based on surge or special initiatives
 - Implement performance and quality standards at the individual and agency levels
 - Provide governance for leasing service level agreements
 - Aid contingency operation planning efforts
 - Presents a unified voice on Departmental leasing issues with GSA and other key stakeholders outside of the department
 - The Director of OPPM as proposed chair of the leasing subcommittee

Assistant Administrator – Chris Beyerhelm, expressed concern that the process of selection for the chair of the subcommittee should be democratic, and representative of Service Center Agency interests. The NFAC principals and their representatives concurred and decided that the proposal warranted further exploration, with a focus on the membership and roles of the subcommittee, and the NFAC role in subcommittee responsibilities.

Meeting Adjourned

With no further issues to address, DUSEC Dore adjourned the meeting.

Attendees

- NFAC Chair: **Vernita Dore** – Deputy Under Secretary, RD
- Administrator, Farm Service Agency: **Chris Beyerhelm** *for Val Dolcini*
- Chief, Natural Resources Conservation Service: **Dan Lawson** *for Jason Weller*
- Assistant Secretary for Administration: **Chris Nelson** *for Gregory Parham*
- USDA StrikeForce Senior Advisor: **Max Finberg**
- USDA Feds Feed Families Lead: **Greg Pompelli**
- Rural Development: **Matthew Fountain, Edna Primrose, Michael Mathews**
- Farm Service Agency: **Rick Pinkston, Dana Richey**
- Forest Service: **Jennifer McDowell**

Attachments

- Addendum A: Meeting Agenda
- Addendum B: FY 16-17 Strike Force Agency Priority Goal
- Addendum C: 2015 Feds Feed Families Field Office Guidance
- Addendum D: OHRM Advisory 2015-006 – Volunteer Guidance
- Addendum E: Feds Feed Families NFAC letter of support

AGENDA

National Food and Agriculture Council

USDA HQ

1400 Independence Ave., SW,

Whitten Bldg., Room 205W

Washington, D.C. 20250

August 20, 2015

1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Vernita Dore, NFAC 2015 Chair

To join by telephone:

Phone Number: 800-981-3173

Access Code: 5174 #, option2

2015 NFAC Goals

Enhance agency partnerships

Enhance our communication

Enhance our tribal impact

1:00 p.m.	Call to Order	
1:05 p.m.	StrikeForce <ul style="list-style-type: none">FY 16-17 Agency Priority Goal reviewStrikeForce Update	Max Finberg
1:30 p.m.	FSIS Space Sharing <ul style="list-style-type: none">Pilot Update – Expansion to WisconsinDiscussion	Matt Fountain
1:40 p.m.	Fed's Feed Families Initiative	Greg Pompelli
1:50 p.m.	NFAC Subcommittee on the USDA Leasing COE	Chris Nelson
2:00 p.m.	Closing Remarks	

August--- NFAC Attendee List

RD

Chair (RD Principal) Vernita Dore - *Deputy Under Secretary, RD*
VernitaF.Dore@osec.usda.gov
DUSEC Assistant Michael Mathews
Michael.Mathews@osec.usda.gov
NFAC Liaison Matthew Fountain
Matt.Fountain@osec.usda.gov

NRCS

NRCS Principal Jason Weller - *Chief, NRCS*
Jason.Weller@wdc.usda.gov
NRCS Chief of Staff
Deputy Chief for Management Dan Lawson
Dan.Lawson@wdc.usda.gov

FSA

FSA Principal Val Dolcini - *Administrator, FSA*
Val.Dolcini@wdc.usda.gov
Agricultural Program Specialist Rick Pinkston
Rick.Pinkston@wdc.usda.gov
Senior Policy Advisor Dana Richey
Dana.Richey@wdc.usda.gov

Presenters

USDA, StrikeForce Senior Advisor	Max Finberg
NFAC Liaison	Matthew Fountain
ERS Associate Administrator	Greg Pompelli

APG Section	Narrative
Goal Statement	To increase USDA program access and leverage resources for investments in rural, high poverty areas.
Goal Overview	<p>Currently, 85 percent of our country's persistent poverty counties are in rural America. More than one third of rural Americans and one in four rural American children live in poverty. Kids growing up in families earning even twice the poverty threshold are nearly three times as likely as other children to have poor health, are more likely to finish two fewer years of school, and earn half as much money in their adult life.</p> <p>Growing the economy by investing in rural communities and increasing opportunities for families is critical to our Nation's future. The StrikeForce Initiative for Rural Growth and Opportunity was created in 2010 to address specific challenges associated with rural poverty. Since then, USDA teams have collaborated with more than 1,000 community partners and public entities to bring targeted assistance to rural areas experiencing chronic poverty. These efforts have helped create jobs, build homes, feed kids, assist farmers and conserve natural resources in StrikeForce designated states.</p> <p>By September 30, 2017, USDA will increase the funding in StrikeForce areas by 10 percent from the 2009 baseline of \$4 billion and leverage \$1 billion of outside resources for investment in StrikeForce and other designated high poverty areas.</p>
Goal Leader	<p>2015 National Food and Agriculture Council Chair, RD Deputy Under Secretary - Vernita Dore 2016 National Food and Agriculture Council Chair, Natural Resources Conservation Service Chief - Jason Weller Assistant Secretary for Administration - Dr. Gregory Parham Rural Business and Cooperative Service Administrator - Lillian Salerno</p>
Goal Lieutenant(s)	<p>Rural Business Service - Bryan Zulko Rural Utilities Service - Gary Bojes Natural Resources Conservation Service - Jacqueline Davis-Slay Farm Service Agency - Latrice Hill</p>
Strategies	<p>From FY 09 to FY 14 USDA field based agencies have consistently averaged a 70% application to obligation rate, with average obligation amounts of \$141,000 for FSA, \$27,942 for NRCS, and \$189,047 for RD. This suggests that in order to reach our target goal of a combined FY16 & 17 10% increase over the FY 09 StrikeForce investment baseline; each agency must maintain an application rate of 7% above their FY 09 baseline each year through September 30, 2017.</p> <p>USDA field-based agencies in the designated StrikeForce states will increase applications through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted outreach efforts and events with new and existing partners, building on the 3,000 events held in 2014 Increased coordination with USDA agencies, other federal agencies and external partners

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification and pursuit of target areas for increased potential partnerships by state • Targeting funding to high poverty areas to the greatest practicable extent 					
Progress Update	<p>Prior to the advent of StrikeForce in 2010, the total investment in target areas was \$3.994 billion in FY 09. In FY 09, there was a baseline of 11,250 applications for our farm and conservation programs and 25,239 awards.</p>					
Next Steps	<p>While the total obligations have fluctuated since 2010, given the sustainment of our current funding trends, our goal is to increase investment by \$200 million over the FY 09 baseline in FY 16 & 17 for a combined total of \$8,388,267,373 in those years – a 10% increase.</p> <p>By coordinating efforts, expanding targeted areas to 880 counties and parishes, and increasing public-private partnerships, each agency should attempt to achieve a minimum increase in average StrikeForce designated area applications of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FSA - 268 applications each year for a total of approximately 5,914 applications by FY 17 • NRCS - 545 applications each year for a total of approximately 15,394 applications by FY 17 • RD - 1,229 applications each year for a total of approximately 28,422 applications by FY 17 					
Indicators (Metrics)		Indicator statement & overview:	Unit of measure:	Frequency of reporting: Quarterly, bi-annually, annually	Targets: FY 16 Q1-4 FY 17 Q1-4	Indicator direction:
	Indicator #1	Increase number of applications to our farm loan programs in order to expand credit and financial assistance to farmers and landowners, particularly women, minority and beginning farmers, through farm loans and microloans.	Number of FSA program applications	Bi-annually	FY 16 - 5,861 FY 17 - 5,914	Increasing
	Indicator #2	Increase number of applications to our conservation programs in order to expand credit and financial assistance to rural landowners, particularly women, minority and beginning farmers, through the Environmental Quality Incentive Program and Regional Conservation Partnership Program.	Number of NRCS program applications	Bi-annually	FY 16 - 14,369 FY 17 - 15,394	Increasing

	Indicator #3	Increase number of applications to our rural development programs in order to expand credit and financial assistance to farmers and landowners, particularly historically underserved groups through the Business and Industry Guaranteed Loan Program, Rural Business Development Grants Program, Rural Cooperative Development Grants Program, Small and Socially-Disadvantaged Producer Grants Program, and the Value-Added Producer Grants Program.	Number of RD program applications	Bi-annually	FY 16 - 27,178* FY 17 - 28,422*	Increasing
	Indicator #4	Increase number of awards for our farm, conservation and rural development programs proportional to the number of loans, grants and contracts applied for across the variety of applicable programs in StrikeForce designated areas.	Quantity of loans, grants, combos, and contracts	Bi-annually	FY 16 32,300 FY 17 33,700	Increasing
	Indicator #5	Increase leverage of targeted investments in high poverty areas through rural development housing, business, and utility program partnerships and in-kind investments.	Quantity of dollars leveraged through RD programs	Quarterly	FY 16 \$40 million - by Q1 \$120 million - by Q2 \$240 million - by Q3 \$469 million - by Q4 FY 17 \$50 million - by Q1 \$150 million - by Q2 \$300 million - by Q3 \$531 million - by Q4	

**Number of applications derived using projected percentage of awards to applications*

**Contributing
Programs & Other
Factors**

StrikeForce utilizes existing programs throughout the USDA to achieve the goals, including:

Agricultural Marketing Service

Farmers Market-Local Food Promotion Program
Specialty Crop Block Grants

Departmental Management

Socially Disadvantaged Farmer and Rancher Outreach Program

Farm Service Agency

Farm Loans, including the Microloan Program

Food and Nutrition Service

Hunger-Free Communities Grants
Farm to School Grants
Farmers Market Nutrition Programs
National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs
Summer Food Service Program
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

National Institute of Food and Agriculture

Agriculture and Food Research Initiative
Community Food Projects
Small Business Innovation Research Program

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Environmental Quality Incentive Program
Regional Conservation Partnership Program

Risk Management Agency

Risk Management Outreach and Education Program

Rural Development

Business and Industry Guaranteed Loan Program
Community Facilities
Rural Business Development Grants Program
Rural Cooperative Development Grants Program
Small and Socially-Disadvantaged Producer Grants Program
Value-Added Producer Grants Program

	<p><i>Leverage in high poverty areas is accomplished primarily through:</i></p> <p>Rural Development - Rural Business-Cooperative Service Business and Industry Guaranteed Loan Program Rural Energy for America Program Rural Business Opportunity Grants Bio-refinery Assistance Program Value-Added Producer Grants Program Rural Cooperative Development Grants Program Intermediary Relending Program Rural Economic Development Loans & Grants Rural Business Enterprise Grants Rural Micro-Enterprise Grants</p> <p>Rural Development - Rural Housing Service Community Facilities Programs Single Family Housing Direct Loans Single Family Housing Guaranteed Loans Single Family Housing Repair Direct Loans and Grants Multi-Family Housing Loans</p> <p>Rural Development - Rural Utilities Service Water and Environmental Programs Telecom Programs Broadband Programs Electric Programs</p>
<p>Related Strategic Goal and Objectives</p>	<p>USDA 2014 – 2018 Strategic Plan Goal 1: Assist rural communities to create prosperity so they are self-sustaining, repopulating, and economically thriving.</p> <p>Objective 1: Enhance rural prosperity, including leveraging capital markets to increase Government's investment in rural America.</p> <p>Key Performance Measures:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of jobs created or saved through investments in business, entrepreneurship, cooperatives and industry 2018 Target: 86,000 2. Percentage of targeted Rural Development investments in high poverty areas that leverage private sector funding 2018 Target: 10% 3. Percentage of rural residents who are provided access to new or improved services resulting from RD investments 2018 Target: 51.4%



Field Office Guidance for Feds Feed Families 2015 Campaign

1. Identify your Agency Chair and Champion. This information can be found on the Feds Feeds Families website: www.usda.gov/fedsfeedfamilies.
 - a. Your Agency Chair will be able to share information provided by the national Program. They will also be your point of contact for reporting pounds collected to be counted as the agency total unless otherwise noted within your agency.
 - b. Agency Chairs and Champion information will be finalized following the July 16, 2015 make-up training session.
2. If you are not familiar with a Food Bank/Food Pantry in your area go to www.feedinamerica.org to find a local food bank or www.AmpleHarvest.org for food pantries that take fresh food donations. When you make contact with your local food bank be sure to ask them questions such as:
 - a. What types of donations are you in need of?
 - b. Do you have containers for collecting donations that can be used by our facility?
 - c. Do you provide pick-up services for collected donations?
 - d. Do you have the ability to weigh donations and provide a receipt?

These questions will help you to figure out the logistics for your campaign. You will be responsible for coordinating collections of donations from employees, delivery of those donations to the food bank/ pantry, weighing, and reporting of your offices donations in pounds.

3. Agency chairs will be expected to have total pounds collected to the National Program office (fedsfeedfamilies@usda.gov) according to the following schedule:
 - August 7, 2015 (June and July numbers)
 - September 4, 2015
 - October 2, 2015 with final number validation completed by October 7, 2015To ensure your locations donations are counted send in your pounds collected total before or as specified by your agency chair or Champion.
4. You are encouraged to have events that will engage and excite employees about your local campaign. If you would like someone from the National Program to attend your event send an email to fedsfeedfamilies@usda.gov with details including; date, time, and location of event.
5. To learn more about gleaning and to find a gleaning opportunities in your area Visit Society of St. Andrews Website <http://www.endhunger.org> .



United States Department of Agriculture

National Food and
Agricultural Council

August 21, 2015

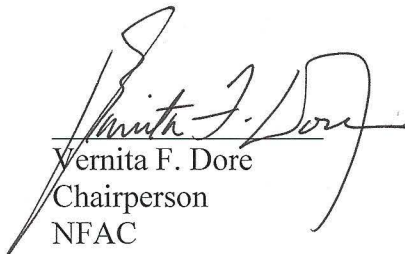
1400 Independence Ave
SW
Washington, DC 20250
Voice 202-260-5937

State Food and Agricultural Council Chairs,

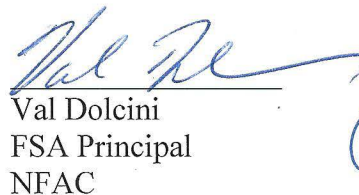
Even as the economy grows stronger, there are still too many people in America struggling to put food on the table. As part of the President's *United We Serve Campaign*, the USDA is once again renewing its commitment to feeding needy families nationwide through the 2015 Feds Feed Families campaign. Since 2009, our generous federal employees have collected nearly 39 million pounds of food for our nation's families, with 14.8 million pounds donated last year alone.

As in every year, employees are asked to bring non-perishable food items and place them into a designated collection box located in the Federal workplace or take them directly to a local food bank. In support of this important opportunity, I ask that you designate at least one SFAC representative to champion this cause in your state through October 2, 2015 and facilitate those donations to local food pantries.

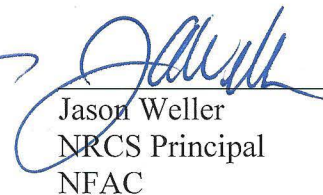
While we look forward to another exciting and successful campaign that we hope will meet or even exceed last year's impressive numbers, we want to thank you for the work that you already do every day to help your neighbors.



Vernita F. Dore
Chairperson
NFAC



Val Dolcini
FSA Principal
NFAC



Jason Weller
NRCS Principal
NFAC

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form (PDF), found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov.

**National Food and Agriculture Council
Minutes
November 6, 2015**

Opening Remarks

NFAC Chair, RD Deputy Under Secretary – Vernita Dore

DUSEC Dore hosted introductions and began the meeting by sharing the changes 2015 has brought to NFAC and welcoming NRCS to provide information on NFAC 2016.

Agenda Item 1 – FY 16 & 17 Combined Agency Priority StrikeForce Goal

USDA StrikeForce Senior Advisor – Dr. Melinda Cep

Dr. Cep shared a brief background on the Secretary's future goals for StrikeForce with a focus on building internal capacity and collaborative work with the Office of Communications (OC) to showcase StrikeForce success stories from the field. She explained the need for specific stories that focus on increased program participation from new sources and interagency collaboration efforts that have been fostered through StrikeForce efforts.

Dr. Cep then shared the Secretary's desire to expand StrikeForce to 4 new states; Florida, Missouri, Montana, and Ohio. The counties under consideration total 91 between the four states. Dr. Cep asked the NFAC to consider the request for expansion and direct each State FAC to do the same. Administrator Dolcini moved that we approve the request and the NFAC principals and their appointed representatives concurred.

Further highlights:

- Each State FAC will be asked to consider the proposal to incorporate the StrikeForce initiative in their State (*addendum B*).
- The State FACs will be asked to review the proposed list of counties (*addendum C*) and provide a recommendation on which counties should be incorporated in the expansion.

Agenda Item 2 – FSIS Space Sharing Pilot

NFAC Liaison – Matt Fountain

Mr. Fountain explained that the FSIS Space Sharing Pilot proposed over one year ago, represented a combined effort to share space among the three service center agencies and FSIS. Since that time the pilot has had low participation rates. A working group was established between NFAC primary staff and FSIS leadership to reexamine the pilot parameters in order to improve participation. The following are the changes recommended by the working group:

- Remove outlook calendar tracking of utilization requirement
- Change primary means of communication from email/calendar requests to verbal/telephone
- Amend advance notice requirement from a two week preferred/72 hour minimum to a 24 hour minimum
- Add a requirement for FSIS to provide a monthly project analysis to NFAC

The NFAC principals and their appointed representatives agreed to accept the amended pilot parameters for a trial period of approximately 3 months with the understanding that the appended notification requirement may limit ad hoc space availability (*addendum D*). The FSIS leadership in attendance acknowledged that risk.

Agenda Item 3 – NFAC SharePoint Workspace

USDA Feds Feed Families Lead – Greg Pompelli (by Phone)

Mr. Fountain presented a concept proposal for a virtual NFAC workspace intended to increase collaboration, streamline & standardize NFAC requests for office actions, problem resolution and agenda items, archive historical NFAC actions and provide tracking of NFAC related metrics displayed on a dynamic dashboard for easy viewing. Mr. Fountain continued to explain that the site would be centrally hosted and owned by all three agencies and was planned for initial piloting at the beginning of the calendar year where feedback from SFACs would be sought and used to refine the final site scheduled to be delivered before the end of 2016.

Further highlights:

- Action page with;
 - Submit an office action using an imbedded form
 - Submit a request for issue resolution with imbedded form
 - Update & Track office actions (Gantt Chart)
- Agenda page with;
 - An interactive form to request time on the agenda
 - A calendar of NFAC meetings/events
 - A list of currently approved agenda items
 - A link to download the most current agenda
- Performance Dashboard page with;
 - Office action status (dynamic within SP)
 - Current year goal tracking (dynamic within SP)
 - Leveraging APG tracking (dynamic with data warehouse)
 - SF APG tracking (dynamic with data warehouse)
- NFAC Repository page with;
 - Regulations
 - NFAC & SFAC minutes
 - NFAC Correspondence
 - NFAC Guidance (memo's etc.)
 - NFAC Handbook
- NFAC Collaboration page with;
 - News Links
 - A Suggestion Box blog
 - A lessons learned newsfeed

The NFAC principals and their representatives expressed unanimous support for the concept workspace (*addendum E*) and requested to receive regular updates with a hope that this project would receive priority for timely completion.

POCs:

Project leads – Matthew Fountain, Dan Lawson

Team Members – Nateria Dickey, Jennifer Zwicke, Ed Duval

Agenda Item 4 – NFAC Subcommittee for the USDA Leasing Center of Excellence

DM ASA, Senior Policy Advisor – Chris Nelson

Mr. Nelson briefly described the construction of the NFAC Subcommittee on Leasing as on hold until further action can occur with the other Leasing COE restructuring processes. Mr. Nelson continued by requesting NFAC support for an upcoming conference call with all 3 service center agencies that will facilitate creation of the Leasing Acquisition Services Division (LASD). All the NFAC principals and their appointed representatives agreed to support this request.

Administrator Dolcini asked Mr. Nelson if the restructuring of leasing would require a 1010 package. Mr. Nelson confirmed that a 1010 package would be required to create the LASD but that the responsibility for the package would rest with DM.

Agenda Item 5 – NFAC FY17 Staffing Proposal

DM ASA, Senior Policy Advisor – Chris Nelson

Mr. Nelson shared that a draft proposal to staff NFAC with up to 15 permanent staff had been submitted to OMB with the FY17 budget request package. The proposal endeavored to provide assistance for the expanding role of NFAC and to institutionalize some of the initiatives that have been important to NFAC and USDA success (*addendum F*).

Further highlights:

- Proposal submitted for the FY17 Budget Year
 - Request for \$5mil and 15 Staff Years
- Includes a request for permanent NFAC staff to support:
 - Strategic Sourcing
 - NFAC Leasing Subcommittee
 - StrikeForce
 - New and Beginning Farmers and Ranchers
 - Bridges to Opportunity
- Proposal includes:
 - HQ staff (5) – to handle governance and logistics
 - Regionalized Field Staff (10) – to support:
 - Engagement of agencies and local organizations to improve program participation
 - Coordinated use of USDA resources to target poverty stricken areas through the implementation of place based strategies such as StrikeForce
 - A shift in the role of the Office of Small Farms Coordination and Farm Worker Coordination from the Office of Outreach and Advocacy to NFAC
 - Continuity and centralization of disparate USDA programs in the field

DUSEC Dore asked Mr. Nelson if this proposal would include any changes to current NFAC procedures. Mr. Nelson stated that he did not foresee any changes to NFAC procedures except an increase in capacity for operations. Gayle Barry on behalf of Chief Weller asked Mr. Nelson to include Mr. Weller in these discussions going forward. Mr. Nelson agreed, and stated that he expects there to be more conversations as we approach the November budget pass back period.

Agenda Item 6 – APHIS HPAI Bird Flu Emergency Preparedness (highly pathogenic avian influenza)
APHIS, Deputy Administrator - William Smith

Dr. Smith provided details on the APHIS 2016 HPAI contingency planning efforts. Dr. Smith further explained the history and increased need seen from the evolution of the virus. Dr. Smith then shared that as a component of the need for contingency planning; APHIS is attempting to identify specific resources that can be utilized in case of epidemic HPAI outbreak (*addendum G*).

Further highlights:

- In order to support these efforts APHIS is asking for volunteer support from agencies in the following categories:
 - HR
 - Contracting
 - Realty
 - Fleet
 - Travel
 - Cooperative Agreements
 - Payment Processing
 - IT
 - Public Affairs
 - Customer Service
 - Disposal
 - GIS

New Business

Administrator Dolcini asked Mr. Nelson to provide an update on the St. Albans, VT office lease status. Mr. Nelson explained that multiple conversations between GSA, local officials, and USDA leadership have occurred in the recent past. The Assistant Secretary for Administration, Dr. Parham had personally visited the old and new GSA proposed site. Mr. Nelson explained that this was a very high priority given the impending expiration of the current lease, and that GSA has requested a conference call in the next week or two with USDA leadership to determine a way forward.

Meeting Adjourned

With no further issues to address, DUSEC Dore adjourned the meeting.

Attendees

- NFAC Chair: **Vernita Dore** – Deputy Under Secretary, RD
- Administrator, Farm Service Agency: **Val Dolcini**
- Chief, Natural Resources Conservation Service: **Gayle Barry** *for Jason Weller*
- Assistant Secretary for Administration: **Chris Nelson** *for Gregory Parham*
- USDA Senior Advisor: **Melinda Cep**
- APHIS Deputy Administrator: **William Smith**
- Rural Development: **Matthew Fountain, Edna Primrose, Michael Mathews, Roger Glendenning**
- Farm Service Agency: **Chris Beyerhelm, Rick Pinkston, Dana Richey, Greg Diephouse**
- National Resources Conservation Service: **Dan Lawson**

Attachments

- Addendum A: Meeting Agenda
- Addendum B: Draft StrikeForce Expansion Decision Memo
- Addendum C: Proposed StrikeForce Expansion Effected Counties
- Addendum D: Signed Amended FSIS Space Sharing Proposal
- Addendum E: NFAC SharePoint Workspace Concept
- Addendum F: FY17 NFAC Staffing Proposal
- Addendum G: APHIS Interagency HPAI Needs

AGENDA

National Food and Agriculture Council

USDA HQ

1400 Independence Ave., SW,

Whitten Bldg., Room 205W

Washington, D.C. 20250

November 6, 2015

11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Vernita Dore, NFAC 2015 Chair

To join by telephone:

Phone Number: 800-981-3173

Access Code: 5174 #, option2

2015 NFAC Goals

Enhance agency partnerships

Enhance our communication

Enhance our tribal impact

11:30	Call to Order	
11:35	StrikeForce Expansion Update	Melinda Cep
11:45	FSIS Space Sharing Pilot Update <ul style="list-style-type: none">• FSIS proposed changes	Matt Fountain
11:50	The New NFAC SharePoint Workspace	Matt Fountain
12:00	NFAC Leasing Subcommittee Implementation	Chris Nelson
12:10	NFAC FY17 Staffing Proposal	Chris Nelson
12:20	APHIS Bird Flu Emergency Preparedness	Dr. John Clifford
12:30	Closing Remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thank you for Feds Feed Families focus	

November--- NFAC Attendee List

RD

Chair (RD Principal) Vernita Dore - *Deputy Under Secretary, RD*
VernitaF.Dore@osec.usda.gov
DUSEC Assistant Michael Mathews
Michael.Mathews@osec.usda.gov
NFAC Liaison Matthew Fountain
Matt.Fountain@osec.usda.gov

NRCS

NRCS Principal Jason Weller - *Chief, NRCS*
Jason.Weller@wdc.usda.gov
NRCS Chief of Staff
Deputy Chief for Management Dan Lawson
Dan.Lawson@wdc.usda.gov

FSA

FSA Principal Val Dolcini - *Administrator, FSA*
Val.Dolcini@wdc.usda.gov
Agricultural Program Specialist Rick Pinkston
Rick.Pinkston@wdc.usda.gov
Senior Policy Advisor Dana Richey
Dana.Richey@wdc.usda.gov

Presenters

USDA, Senior Advisor to the Secretary	Melinda Cep
NFAC Liaison	Matthew Fountain
ASA, Senior Advisor	Chris Nelson
APHIS, Deputy Administrator	Dr. John Clifford

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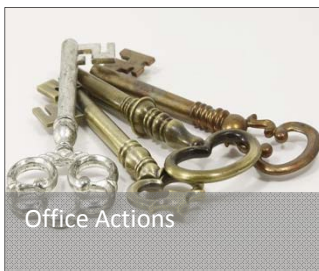
Addendum**E**

NFAC 2016

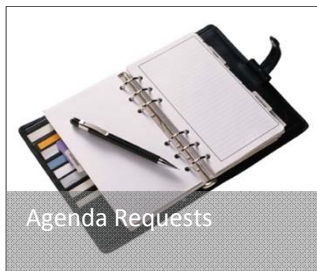


Goals

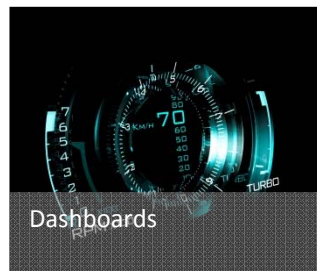
Enhance our communication
Enhance our collaboration
Advance StrikeForce impacts



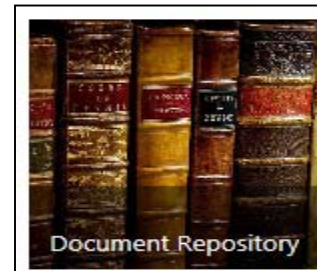
Office Actions



Agenda Requests



Dashboards



Document Repository



Collaboration



NFAC Actions

Office Action Number:



Date of request

State

City

Location

Agencies

Type of Request

State Office	Date Received	HR Specialist Assigned	HR Director	DAOM	USEC	NFAC Approval	Procurement	OCR Approval	Secretary Approval	Congressional Approval	State Notified by HR
FY16 NFAC Actions											
California											
Louisiana											
FY15 NFAC Actions											
Alaska	7/16/2015	W. Jeter									
Alaska	7/17/2015	W. Jeter									
Kansas	1/24/2014	D. Young	1/28/2014			6/14/2014	3/13/2014				
FY13 NFAC Actions											
Georgia	7/10/13	D. Young	7/17/2013	7/17/2013	8/16/2013	9/6/2013	7/8/2014				
Utah	7/29/13	D. Young	8/12/2013	8/12/2013	8/16/2013	9/3/2013	6/26/2014				

NFAC Agenda



December 3, 2015

SUBMIT FOR TIME ON THE AGENDA

Requested Start Time:

Requested End Time:

Topic:

Name of Presenter:

AGENDA

National Food and Agriculture Council

USDA HQ
1400 Independence Ave., SW,
Whitten Bldg., Room 205W
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 20, 2015
1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Vernita Dore, NFAC 2015 Chair

To join by telephone:
Phone Number: 800-981-3173
Access Code: 5174 #, option 2

2015 NFAC Goals
Enhance agency partnerships
Enhance our communication
Enhance our tribal impact

1:00 p.m.	Call to Order	
1:05 p.m.	StrikeForce <ul style="list-style-type: none"> FY 16-17 Agency Priority Goal review StrikeForce Update 	Max Finberg
1:30 p.m.	FSIS Space Sharing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pilot Update – Expansion to Wisconsin Discussion 	Matt Fountain
1:40 p.m.	Fed's Feed Families Initiative	Greg Pompelli
1:50 p.m.	NFAC Subcommittee on the USDA Leasing COE	Chris Nelson
2:00 p.m.	Closing Remarks	

[Download Current Agenda](#)

NFAC Performance Dashboard

CURRENT OFFICE ACTIONS

State Office	Date Received	HR Specialist Assigned	HR Director	DAOM	USEC	NFAC Approval	Procurement	OCR Approval	Secretary Approval	Congressional Approval	State Notified by HR
FY16 NFAC Actions											
California											
Louisiana											
FY15 NFAC Actions											
Alaska	7/16/2015	W. Jeter									
Alaska	7/17/2015	W. Jeter									
Kansas	1/24/2014	D. Young	1/28/2014			6/14/2014	3/13/2014				
FY13 NFAC Actions											
Georgia	7/10/13	D. Young	7/17/2013	7/17/2013	8/16/2013	9/6/2013	7/8/2014				
Utah	7/29/13	D. Young	8/12/2013	8/12/2013	8/16/2013	9/3/2013	6/26/2014				

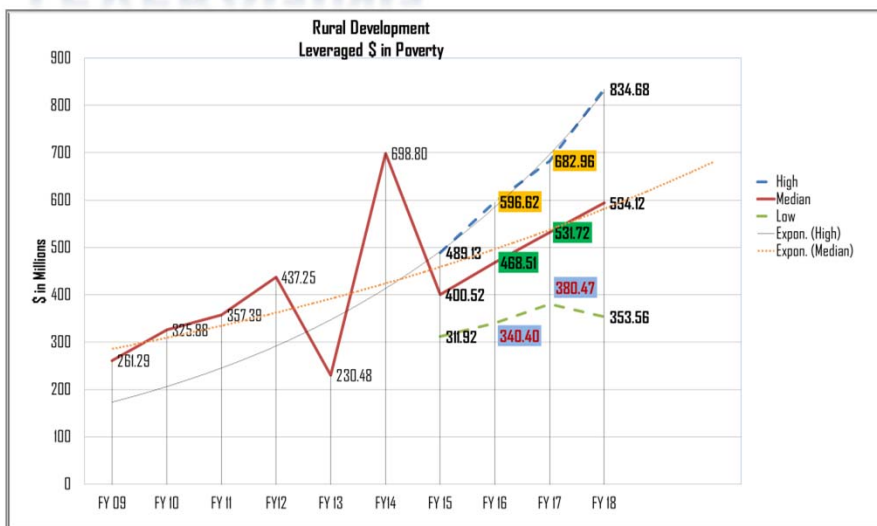
2016 GOAL TRACKING

Enhance our communication %

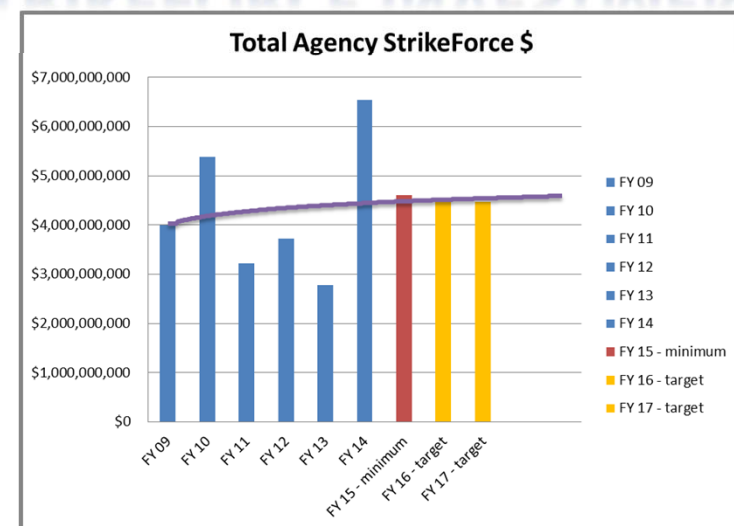
Enhance our collaboration %

Advance StrikeForce impacts %

LEVERAGING



STRIKEFORCE INVESTMENTS



	Edit	NOFA	Agency	Farm Bill	Current Reviewer	Submitted OBPA	Cleared OBPA	Submitted USEC	Cleared USEC	Submitted OSEC	Cleared OSEC	Publication Date
		REDLG	RBS	No	RD	2/19/2014	3/11/2014	3/11/2014				
		RCDG	RBS	Yes	Pending	3/5/2014	3/11/2014	3/11/2014	4/15/2014	4/16/2014	4/18/2014	
		VAPG Extension	RBS	Yes	Published	3/6/2014	3/11/2014	3/11/2014	3/11/2014	3/11/2014	3/14/2014	3/25/2014
		Delta Health Care	RBS	No	Published	3/19/2014	3/27/2014	3/27/2014	3/28/2014	3/28/2014	4/2/2014	4/14/2014
		REAP	RBS	Yes	Pending	3/25/2014	4/3/2014	4/3/2014	4/15/2014	4/16/2014	4/18/2014	
		RBIP	RBS	No	Published	3/25/2014	4/2/2014	4/2/2014	4/3/2014	4/4/2014	4/4/2014	4/25/2014
		REDLG	RBS	Yes	Pending	3/27/2014	4/4/2014	4/7/2014	4/10/2014	4/14/2014	4/15/2014	
		Locally/Regionally Produced Agricultural Food Products	RBS	Yes	Pending	4/1/2014	4/7/2014	4/7/2014	4/14/2014	4/14/2015	4/15/2014	
		RBEG Transportation	RBS	No	Pending	4/10/2014	4/11/2014	4/11/2014	4/15/2014	4/15/2014	4/18/2014	
		SSDPG	RBS	No	Pending	4/10/2014	4/11/2014	4/11/2014	4/14/2014	4/15/2014	4/18/2014	
		RMAP	RBS	Yes	OSEC	4/15/2014	4/25/2014	4/25/2014	4/29/2014	4/29/2014		
		NOFA: Repowering Assistance Program	RBS	No	USEC	4/21/2014	4/29/2014	4/29/2014				
		Intermediary Relending Program (IRP)	RBS	No	USEC	4/22/2014	4/29/2014	4/29/2014				
		Water: TAT	RUS	No	Published	2/12/2014	3/10/2014	3/10/2014	3/12/2014	3/12/2014	3/18/2014	4/4/2014
		Water: HWWS	RUS	No	Published	3/6/2014	3/10/2014	3/10/2014	3/12/2014	3/12/2014	3/18/2014	3/26/2014
		Water: Revolving Fund	RUS	No	Published	2/28/2014	3/10/2014	3/10/2014	3/12/2014	3/12/2014	3/18/2014	3/26/2014
Add new item												

NFAC Collaboration

THE SUGGESTION BOX

Month View	List View	Filter Categories
< JANUARY 2009 >		
Jan 1, 2009		
7:15 PM - Midnight	Panthers vs. Cowboys (View Detail)	
Jan 2, 2009		
Midnight - 9:30 PM	Panthers vs. Cowboys (View Detail)	
Jan 6, 2009		
1:00 PM - 1:30 PM	Early Release (View Detail)	
Jan 12, 2009		
7:00 PM - 8:00 PM	TTA Meeting (View Detail)	
Jan 22, 2009		
All Day	Drew's Birthday (View Detail)	
1:00 PM - 1:30 PM	Early Release (View Detail)	
Jan 29, 2009		
All Day	Danny's Birthday (View Detail)	

NEWS LINKS

List	Description
Accessibility	Accessibility
Announce	OpenStreetMap Announcements
Design	(no description available)
Dev	OpenStreetMap developer discussion
Dev-It	Discussions on improving OSM's infrastructure
Diversity talk	Discussions on improving diversity in the OSM community
Geocoding	Discussions on geocoding
GPS tags	GPS Tag Team (OpenStreetMap scheme for providing GPS reviews)
GPS tags Announce	GPS Tag Team Announcements (OpenStreetMap scheme for providing GPS reviews)
Geoplayers	OpenStreetMap Java routing engine
Historic	Explorations of an OpenStreetMap Approach to Historic Mapping
HOT	Humanitarian OSM Team
Images	(no description available)
Imports	US Import Committee Discussion List
Java dev	OSM developer mailing list
License code	(no description available)
Legal general	General discussions about alternative OSM licensing scenarios
Legal talk	Licensing and other legal discussions
Local chapters	(no description available)
Local dev	Local dev
Maps	MapOSM implementations and stylesheet authors
Maintenance	(no description available)
Moderation	This list has been discontinued
Newbies	Help for new users
OpenStreetMap	Mailing list to discuss tagging and rendering taking trails using the OpenStreetMap Database
Open professionals	A list about OSM in a professional (commercial, government, non-profit) sector

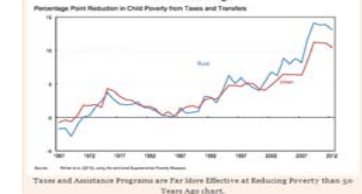
LESSONS LEARNED

Creating Opportunity for All in Rural Communities

Posted by USDA Office of Communications, on May 20, 2013 at 12:33 PM

0 Comments

Taxes and Assistance Programs are Far More Effective at Reducing Poverty than 50 Years Ago



Last month, the Obama Administration and the White House Rural Council, with Secretary Vilsack as the chair, launched *Rural Impact*, a coordinated effort across federal agencies to strengthen rural economies by supporting children and their families.

Today, Secretary Vilsack is in Memphis, Tennessee to attend the 10th Annual Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Conference. Speaking with delegations from over 20 countries to discuss rural economic development, he is discussing a new report, summarized below. This report examines what we know about kids living in rural poverty in the U.S. and how we can best assist them to reach their full potential.

If we invest in our rural communities, especially children and families experiencing poverty in these areas, we will be building a stronger country for our future.

Cross-posted from the White House blog: [Read more >](#)

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Related Posts

- Planting Seeds for New Careers for our Veterans
- Adding a Helping of Protein to Nutritious Summer Meals
- Sustainable Land Management can Provide Building Materials for Post-Disaster Recovery

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National Food and Agriculture Council

Minutes of 4th Quarter Meeting Held on December 3, 2015

Opening Remarks

NFAC Chair, RD Deputy Under Secretary (DUSEC) – Vernita Dore

DUSEC Dore began by sharing the many notable achievements of the 2015 Food and Agriculture Council, and thanked the many parties that had a hand in making this level of success possible.

Further highlights:

- Creation of the first ever official StrikeForce Agency Priority Goal;
- Expansion of StrikeForce to 6 new states;
- Formation of partnerships to support Bridges To Opportunity;
- Collaboration with the National Science Foundation on the Food Energy Water Nexus initiative;
- Joint support for the 2015 FNS summer feeding program;
- Improvements in SFAC collaboration with Local Cooperative Extensions;
- Cost savings of more than a quarter of a Million dollars per year and;
- Holdover lease backlog reduction of 99% with guidance and assistance from partners like Assistant Secretary Parham!

Agenda Item 1 – Lessons From The Field: SFAC Best Practices

Rural Development, Wisconsin State Director – Stan Gruszynski

Mr. Gruszynski began by explaining that the Wisconsin State FAC has grown into an organization that can build capacity of all types within the state. He explained that the catalyst for this improvement in SFAC collaboration was the One USDA initiative. This initiative galvanized the SFAC members and inspired the state leadership to develop a work plan to guide the implementation of One USDA. The SFAC was chosen as the ideal vehicle to start building the relationships and coalitions necessary to accomplish One USDA.

The Wisconsin FAC was quickly successful in demonstrating its effectiveness at keeping the participating parties informed and in breaking down communication barriers within USDA partner agencies. However the benefits readily expanded to external agencies and to USDA customers after the Wisconsin FAC became known for substantive and actionable content. The increased participation garnered by this reputation attracted multiple agencies to the FAC and created an environment that encouraged activities like collaborative, multi-agency outreach events. The effectiveness of this approach has allowed the Wisconsin FAC to pool resources used to accomplish things that no single agency could have achieved on its own and to reach brand new groups of constituents through a strategy of cross agency promotion.

Mr. Gruszynski finished by stating that this approach is easily scalable and that he hopes to see more opportunities next year to use the Food and Agriculture Council as a vehicle to not only improve lateral communication among partner agencies but also to enhance vertical communication between the National Office and Field Offices.

Agenda Item 2 – Update on Bridges To Opportunity

Farm Service Agency, Bridges to Opportunity Program Manager – Glenn Schafer

Mr. Schafer began by explaining that Bridges To Opportunity (BTO) is a system designed as an “Ag-Gateway” to offer information about USDA programs and to provide follow up with points of contact for additional assistance. Ultimately this platform will share customer information between the Service Center Agencies through the use of a portal, and with customer permission the information will also be shared with external agencies such as the Farm Bureau, for the purposes of streamlined referrals.

He explained that this will be accomplished with a Customer Resource Management system, called Salesforce that will leverage the Farm Service Agency (FSA) footprint to assist in Service Center Agency program delivery while providing a “warm hand off” to customers. Additionally BTO will be natively equipped with the capability to provide a *receipt for service* to customers for programs affected by this requirement.

Mr. Schafer explained that phase I of BTO customer service efforts began with a pilot in five states. The success of that pilot has driven the project to expand into 20 states, with a preliminary launch set for February of 2016, referred to as BTO phase II. Phase III of BTO is planned to expand the system to all states in late 2016.

In support of the phase II expansion, Mr. Schafer asked the NFAC Principals to:

1. Identify a point of contact within each Service Center Agency that can act as the liaison for phase II BTO deployment within their respective agency to assist with integrating the new software into the RD & NRCS mission areas.
2. Publish a letter to the affected State FACs, asking for their support in this initiative.

The SFAC Principals and their representatives unanimously agreed to these requests.

Agenda Item 3 – Leasing Center of Excellence Update

DM/ASA, Supervisory Program Analyst – Chris Nelson

Mr. Nelson started with a status update on the Leasing Center of Excellence (COE) reorganization request. He shared that the request was with OMB for review and that it would be reasonable to expect a decision soon after the holiday season. Meanwhile, the Deputy Administrators for Operations and Management of each Service Center Agency have been engaged in making preparations to stand up the NFAC subcommittee on leasing once the appropriations pre-notification for establishment of the Leasing COE is received by the USDA.

Mr. Nelson also mentioned that the identification of procurement efficiencies and resource demand management through Strategic Sourcing will continue to be a USDA priority in Fiscal Year 2016, with a focus on the following core areas:

- *Moving from an owned to a leased fleet where there are notable savings in “total cost of ownership”
 - 19,000 vehicles USDA wide have been identified as cheaper to lease than own
 - 4,000 USDA vehicles have been designated for conversion to date
- Achieving greater economies of scale through increased fleet vehicle utilization
- Expansion of office collocation beyond the Service Center Agencies to reduce overall lease portfolio expense

*Note – Assistant Secretary for Administration, Dr. Parham wants to remind everyone that active management will be essential to ensure we don’t retain owned vehicles that were intended to be replaced by leased vehicles.

Agenda Item 4 – StrikeForce Update

Rural Development, StrikeForce National Manager – Bryan Zulko

Mr. Zulko explained that the StrikeForce initiative is planned for expansion to four additional states with a total of 91 counties. According to the latest Census data these counties are the majority of those above the 20% persistent poverty threshold that have not already been included in StrikeForce.

The new states are:

- Florida
- Missouri
- Montana
- Ohio

Mr. Zulko concluded by thanking the NFAC for a successful year in StrikeForce and by introducing the StrikeForce program lead for 2016 – Natasha Brown, NRCS. The Principals inquired about the final memorandum of StrikeForce expansion and Mr. Zulko explained that it is expected to be signed by the Secretary on the week of December 7th.

Meeting Adjourned

With no further issues to address, DUSEC Dore adjourned the meeting

Attendees

- NFAC Chair **Vernita Dore** - Deputy Under Secretary, RD
- Deputy Administrator, Farm Service Agency: **Chris Beyerhelm** *for Val Dolcini*
- Chief, Natural Resources Conservation Service: **Jason Weller**
- DM / Office of ASA: **Chris Nelson**
- Director OPPM: **Lisa Wilusz**
- USDA CIO: **Joyce Hunter**
- AMS Administrator: **Rex Barnes** *for Anne Alonzo*
- ARS Administrator: **Gary Mayo** *for Chavonda Jacobs-Young*
- ERS Administrator: **Mary Bohman**
- FAS Administrator: **Adam Healy** *for Phil Karsting*
- FNS Administrator: **Tony Craddock** *for Audrey Rowe*
- FS Administrator: **Bryan Rice** *for Andrea Bedell-Loucks*
- NASS Administrator: **Gregory Preston** *for Joe Reilly*
- NIFA Administrator: **Brent Elrod** *for Sonny Ramaswamy*
- Rural Development: **Matthew Fountain, Stan Gruszynski, Edna Primrose, Bryan Zulko, Whinlesha Jeter, LaVonda Pernel**
- Farm Service Agency: **Rick Pinkston, Greg Diephouse, Glenn Schafer, Linda Cronin**
- Natural Resources Conservation Service: **Dan Lawson, Natasha Brown, Jeff Zimprich**

Attachments

- Addendum A: Meeting Agenda
- Addendum B: Bridges to Opportunity Presentation
- Addendum C: StrikeForce Expansion Decision Memo

