

Women, Land & Legacy



Women, Land and Legacy News

October 2023

Two New WLL Chapters Coming in 2024

Women Land and Legacy excitement is brewing! Two new chapters have recently formed and are planning their Listening Sessions for early 2024.

The Boone and Greene WLL Chapter began forming in February and started to plan their Listening Sessions in September. Two Listening Sessions will be held in Ogden January 23, 2024. The Boone and Greene WLL local team includes a variety of partners including the local NRCS, FSA, SWCD (staff and Commissioner), and ISU Extension and Outreach. The team also includes a local bank, non-profit organization, and local farm women. They are heading toward great success in their future WLL efforts.

The Black Hawk, Bremer, Butler, and Grundy WLL Chapter began forming in April and started to plan their Listening Sessions in September. The chapter will hold Listening Sessions in two different counties in late March 2024. Partners on their local team include the local NRCS, FSA, SWCD (staff and Commissioner), a local bank and local farm women. The future looks bright for this new WLL chapter!

The addition of the two new chapters brings the total number of WLL chapters to 22, which includes 44 of Iowa's counties. There are also several additional counties considering WLL in future years. The expansion of the number of chapters, the involved counties, the tremendous partners, and the information and resources offered to Iowa's farm women defines an exciting future for WLL.

Counties interested in having a discussion in 2023 about forming a WLL chapter in 2024 can contact Tanya Meyer-Dideriksen, NRCS State Outreach Coordinator at tanya.meyer@usda.gov.



Jackson County renewal Listening Session, December 2022.

Comments from members of the WLL State Team regarding their experience with WLL:

- “I am always impressed with the unique activities local chapters plan and carry out for the good of their local situation. Such an opportunity for local women to ‘do what needs to be done’ for the place they know better than anyone else.” **Carol Richardson Smith, a founding member**
- “Being a part of the WLL state team has been truly rewarding and an honor. Through Tanya and the team members, I’ve learned so much about the challenges agricultural women face. It’s a privilege to be part of a team that is making a real difference in the lives of women and the health of our land.” **Lisa Scarbrough, ISU Extension**

Meet the WLL State Team Members

This year, the WLL State Team members are being introduced through the Women Land and Legacy News. This issue introduces Catherine DeLong, Lisa Scarbrough, and Rachel Burke.

Catherine DeLong has been a member of the WLL State Team since 2022. She is the Water Quality Program Manager for Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. In her role, she works statewide to help Iowans understand the role they play in water quality, connect them to resources and inspire action.

Catherine took a circuitous route to working in water quality and agriculture. After college, she joined AmeriCorps in the Southwestern US, worked as a ski lift operator in Colorado, and even had a short tenure on an almond farm in California. All these experiences helped her understand that she wanted a career with a connection to the landscape. She's realized that goal in her work for ISU Extension. Catherine lives in Ames and enjoys traveling and the great outdoors.



Catherine DeLong

Lisa Scarbrough joined the WLL State Team in 2021 and is a communications specialist with the Iowa State University Department of Economics, member of the Iowa State Extension and Outreach farm management team, and co-leader of the Women in Ag program. Lisa produces videos that showcase the successes of women working in agriculture. She also develops communication materials including posters, flyers, and brochures. Working with a national team, she helped launch the Women in Agriculture Learning Network and coordinated promotion and facilitation of webinars for a national audience. Lisa received a degree in communication studies with a minor in journalism from the University of Iowa. She has twenty years of experience meeting the promotion and communication needs of Iowa State Extension and Outreach’s internal clients and external partners and stakeholders.



Lisa Scarbrough

Rachel Burke joined the WLL State Team in May 2023 as the newest member. She started working at Practical Farmers of Iowa as the beginning farmer engagement coordinator in March of this year. She provides resources and acts as the first contact for beginning farmers who want to engage with the PFI community and programs. Rachel's role is focused on outreach, relationship building, and farmer led education.



Rachel Burke

From the story: How Women in Iowa are Leading Farmland Conservation Efforts

Iowa PBS interview with Jean Eels by Mark Bittman, 3/7/2020

This PBS story is a conversation between Special Correspondent Mark Bittman and Jean Eels, farm owner and educator. Jean's background includes many years of research on women landowners and that as a member of the state Soil Conservation Committee.

In the interview, Jean shares how women have a deep-seated concern for the community, for farmers, for their family and for their land. They don't always get to express that caring and concern because "you just don't talk about those things." This is mostly because of the decades-old tradition of "men farm", "men make decisions about the land", and "women are not

involved, even when it is their land." Although, because women own or co-own roughly 50% of Iowa's farmland, they can and should have tremendous influence.

Jean shares how she learned through the state Soil Conservation Committee about the high percentage of women-owned land, she then realized that she didn't see them active as conservationists and she was curious about that. She learned that many women farm owners have little or no experience farming themselves. They hire tenants to do the farming, and most of them are men.

Through Women Food and Agriculture Network (WFAN) events, Jean has taught women about land conservation and the role women could potentially play in making sure their farmer tenants are implementing sustainable practices. She shared that 50-70% of the women who attend these one-day events will take an action to improve conservation on their land. The WFAN events have partnered well with Women Land and Legacy (WLL), sometimes leading into the development of a new WLL chapter.



Iowa WLL and Cedar, Johnson, Muscatine, and Scott WLL jointly held the Hemp Farm Tour Learning Session, August 2023.

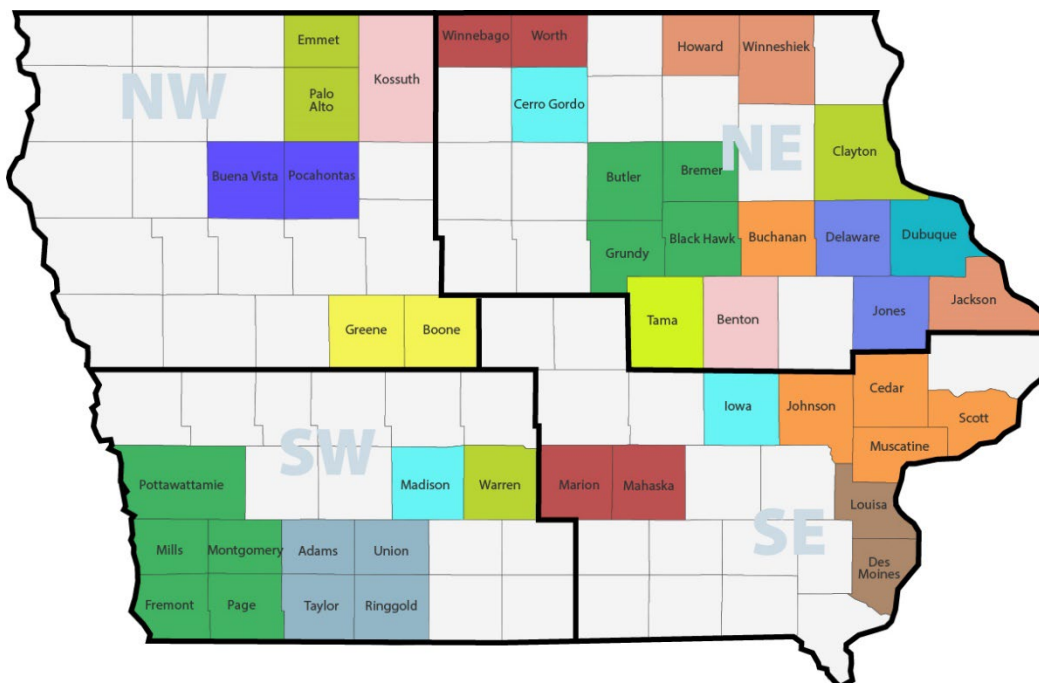
Interviewer Mark Bittman commented, "It's really a conversation about how do you or how are you changing gender roles or how are you getting men to be more respectful of the women they are dealing with." Jean says she is "holding out hope" that if we change the conversation and give women a place at the table, something is going to change.

Over the past 20 years of WLL, we have seen a change and a shift. There is still room for more improvement, and efforts such as those conducted by WFAN, ISU Extension & Outreach Women in Ag program, Iowa Women in Agriculture, and of course, locally led WLL Learning Sessions, will continue to change the agricultural climate for women in Iowa.

OPPORTUNITIES

Mahaska-Marion County WLL Chapter "Women in Agriculture Exhibition Fair" November 4 from 9 – 11am at Central College Graham Annex (812 University St.) in Pella. Connect and network with other women, share experiences and learn more about different business ventures in agriculture. RSVP to Nichole Baxter at Nichole.baxter@usda.gov or call 641-531-7090.

Iowa Counties with WLL Teams



About Women, Land and Legacy

Women, Land & Legacy (WLL) is a USDA-sponsored education and outreach program impacting thousands of Iowa women connected to agriculture. Working at the county level and utilizing dialogue, learning sessions and networking opportunities, WLL empowers women and provides resources for decision-making that impacts women's land, families and community.



Connect With Us

www.womenlandandlegacy.org
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Want to Start WLL in Your County?

Contact your local NRCS, FSA, SWCD or Extension Office. Or Contact Tanya Meyer Dideriksen, NRCS Outreach Coordinator, at tanya.meyer@usda.gov.