

Women, Land & Legacy



Women, Land and Legacy News

July 2023

WLL's Plan to Guide the Next 5 Years

The Women, Land and Legacy (WLL) State Team has been working with Laura Meyer of KC Creative Strategies in NW Iowa to develop a 5-year strategic plan and an annual plan. The plans were completed in June, thanks to funding from Iowa NRCS.

The planning process began with surveys of the state team members, local team members and women across Iowa that have participated in WLL events. Survey responses were completed by the end of April, with a great response rate and valuable information to inform strategic planning.

From there, the state team utilized a framework developed by Laura to finalize priority areas, goals and to begin envisioning outcomes during a work meeting in April. Utilizing that information, Laura led the team through a final strategic planning meeting in late May. With involvement and input from all stakeholders, the plan will be a valuable guide through 2028.

The Priority Areas for WLL are Operations (internal) and Value (external). Simply put, the goals internally are to Sustain, Strategize, and Communicate. Externally, the goals are to Support, Engage and Empower. From there, the more detailed strategies and expected outcomes for each goal spell out the real work to be done. That work has already begun and will continue.

In August, Tanya Meyer-Dideriksen, WLL Coordinator, will present the plan to the NRCS Leadership Team and then share it with WLL Local Teams and others as needed. The



state team is excited about the future advancement of WLL and enhancing resources and assistance for Iowa's farm women.

2023 Iowa Women in Agriculture Conference August 3

"Growing Connections" is the theme of the 17th Annual Iowa Women in Agriculture (IWIA) conference at the FFA Enrichment Center in Ankeny on August 3.

The conference is from 8:15am to 4:30pm. There are many great topics and presenters including former WLL State Team member, Ruth McCabe. WLL will also be there as an exhibitor.

There are several pre-conference events available on August 2. See the website www.iowawomeninag.org for full conference and pre-conference details (including lodging) and to register. Early bird registration until August 1 is \$55 and \$75 after that date. Questions can be address to President Cheryl Tevis at 515-353-4425.

Comments describing the most positive experiences about the January 30 Jones and Delaware County Women Land and Legacy Listening Sessions:

- “Knowing there is a support system available to help women build confidence to farm.”
- “The passion all of the women have for agriculture and sustainability.”
- “Gaining a new network and more resources for knowledge.”
- “Talking about future resources. Small group sessions were helpful to discuss.”
- “Networking, hope for the future, engaging with other women.”

Meet the WLL State Team Members

In the most recent issue of Women, Land and Legacy News, you were introduced to two members of the WLL State Team. This issue introduces Amanda Hartman, Kate Bussanmas, and Angie Sebastian.

Amanda Hartman joined the WLL State Team in 2020. She grew up in a small farming town in southeast Nebraska and has called Iowa home for the past 22 years. In her role as the Iowa Farm Service Agency (FSA) Public Affairs and Outreach Specialist, Amanda works with FSA offices and partners to promote the various programs and opportunities that USDA has to offer, she has been with the USDA for 13 years.



Amanda Hartman

“There are so many incredible things happening in agriculture across our state. Being a part of Women, Land and Legacy and seeing the networks and connections that women are making has been a great experience,” Amanda stated.

Amanda and her family reside in Johnston. Amanda is an avid flower gardener with a love for pollinators. Her family enjoys traveling “off the beaten path” and exploring the national parks.



Kate Bussanmas

Kate Bussanmas has been a member of the WLL State Team since 2018. She serves as the Deputy Director of the Division of Soil Conservation and Water Quality (DSCWQ) within the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS). Through this position, she plays a leadership role within the WLL State Team.

Kate grew up in Ringgold County but now resides in Norwalk with her sons. She is dedicated to the efforts of WLL and the greater conservation partnership and provides essential guidance and support to WLL.



June 2023 Tama County WLL Pollinator event.

Angie Sebastian joined the WLL State Team in 2019. She serves as an Environmental Specialist Senior with the Mines and Minerals Bureau of the IDALS. She is a former Field Representative and Conservation Assistant with the DSCWQ of IDALS, so provides multiple perspectives and guidance for WLL's efforts across the state.

She and her family reside in Granger. Angie is very involved in her children's sporting activities and has been a youth basketball coach for many years. She has also served on many community boards in Granger, including Little Hawks Basketball Club, Parks & Rec, Parent



Angie Sebastian

Teacher Organization, as Public Forum Coordinator, and Planning and Zoning.

Breaking Barriers: Women-led organizations empower Iowa female farm landowners

From an article by Brittney J. Miller in The Gazette 6/26/23

During an interview with Brittney Miller, reporter with The Gazette in Cedar Rapids, Tanya Meyer-Dideriksen was impressed by the interest and enthusiasm of this young woman reporter wanting to share the story of Iowa's women farm owners and resources available for them.

In the article, [You can read it online here](#), she shares the story of a woman landowner in Clayton County whose husband passed away 7 years ago. She instantly became the sole farm owner and didn't understand USDA programs. Because the employee was challenging to understand, she asked the employee to slow down and explain things at a slower pace because this was all new to her. This is so fortunate, as some would just never return to the USDA office. This is a good lesson that USDA employees need to take the needed time, talk in plain language (no acronyms), and slow down. This is needed for outreach, whether with a widow customer or other new farmers.

A 2022 farmland study shows that 47% of Iowa's farmland is owned or co-owned by women, which equals 46% of Iowa's farmland acres! Women are still somewhat overlooked, although that dynamic is slowly improving, thanks to organizations and programs such as Women Food and Agriculture Network (WFAN) and Women Land and Legacy (WLL).



June 2023 SW Iowa WLL Chapter event.

Wendong Zhang was, until recently, the lead researcher of Iowa State University's Iowa Farmland Ownership and Tenure Survey. His findings in 2022 showed that women owned just as much farmland in 1982 as today! "For a lot of the information we gather, we lose the perspectives on women landowners or producers", Zhang said, "It's really hard to find even the voices of women producers, let alone women landowners."

Barriers shared by women included:

1. Becoming a widow and being thrust into a management role.
2. Negotiating the tenant relationships and not being confident to do so.
3. Ag and conservation events mostly attended by men are not a comfortable atmosphere to ask necessary questions.
4. Women may not even be invited or aware of these events.



June 2023 Jones and Delaware WLL Chapter Pasture and Grazing Event.

During the 2022 study, women shared interest in the carbon credit programs, soil erosion control, soil fertility management and cover crops. They prefer a mix of in-person and virtual events.

Iowa is fortunate to have many resources for Iowa's farm women, including the Women in Ag program through Iowa State University Extension & Outreach. Click the link to see other resources that support and educate women involved in agriculture.

<https://womenlandandlegacy.files.wordpress.com/2023/04/women-of-iowa-agriculture-resource-guide-2023.pdf>

WLL, being implemented since 2004, is locally led to listen to women at the local level and develop programming based on local needs. The current 22 chapters (41 counties) are led by a local team that is supported by the WLL State Team. Women Food and Agriculture Network (WFAN) creates connections to educate and support women in ag at the national level. Iowa State University's newly formed Women's Woodland Stewardship Network (WWSN) is a program for women interested in learning more about timber and has been a great partner to WLL. The two groups have conducted several well-attended forest walks across the state in recent years.

There is more work to do and WLL realizes that as we continue to expand our efforts with 10 potential new counties (3 chapters) that may get started later in 2023 or in 2024.

TEDxtalk by WLL Local Team Member

Jodi Enos-Berlage, Professor of Biology at Luther College in Decorah and an active member of the Winneshiek-Howard WLL Chapter recently conducted a TEDxtalk about [The Power of the Unseen](#), which discusses soil health and the "unseen" women landowners and operators. She emphasizes the difference in value to soil health that the 47% women landowners in Iowa can make for agriculture in our state. Highly recommended!!!

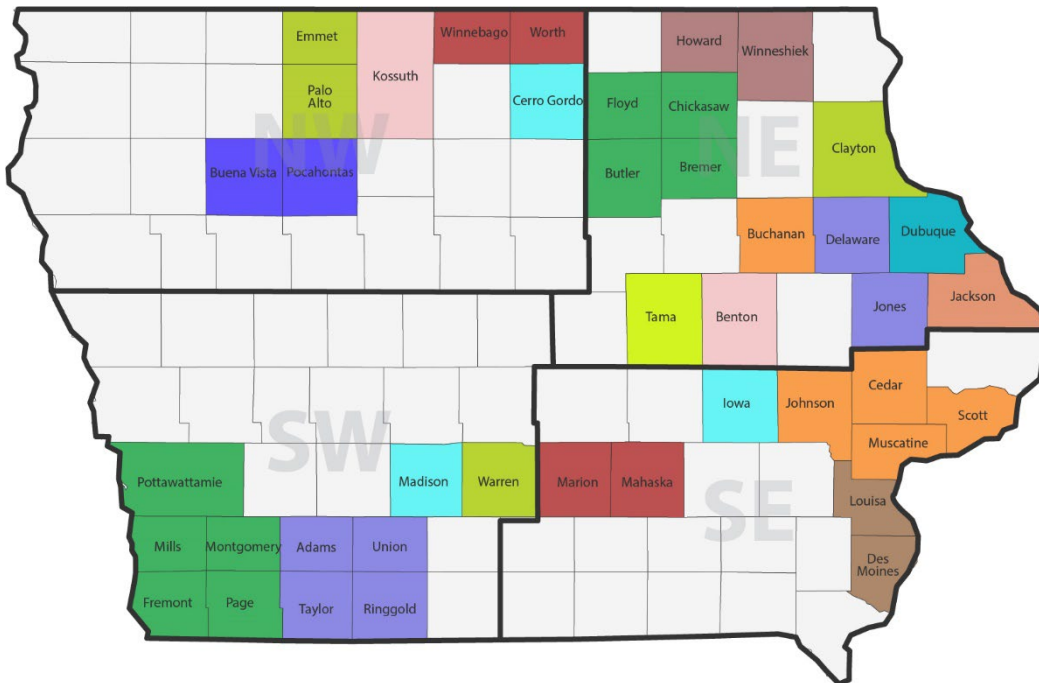


Jodi Enos-Berlage

OPPORTUNITIES

Iowa County WLL and Cedar, Johnson, Muscatine, and Scott County WLL Chapters “Hemp Farm Field Day Event at Four Winds Farm”. August 14 from 9am – 12pm at Four Winds near Homestead, IA (2312 Alpine Ave. NW). Walk the hemp fields and experience a newer sustainable trend in ag. RSVP to Marcy at 563-886-6214 or marcy.mcbride@ia.nacdnet.net by July 31. Limited to 50 people. A \$5 donation guarantees your spot and covers the catered lunch. Send to Johnson SWCD, 205 W. South St., Tipton, IA 52772.

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
stateteam@womenlandandlegacy.org
facebook.com/womenlandandlegacy

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.