

Women, Land and Legacy Historical Timeline

2003 – May 2014

| Date(s) | Event(s) |
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| August 2003 | The USDA State Outreach Council (SOC) determines a need for an outreach project for Iowa's farm women and forms a committee. Initial committee members included: Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Farm Service Agency (FSA), Rural Development (RD), Women Food and Agriculture Network (WFAN), National Catholic Rural Life Conference (NCRLC), Ecumenical Ministries of Iowa (EMI), National Agricultural Statistics Service, and Iowa State University Extension. |
| Late 2003 | The committee meets and determines the project needs to focus on local needs of women and the project's first step will be to ask women for input and LISTEN to them. This project will utilize information from the "Study of Cass County Iowa Women Farmland Owners" conducted by Women, Food and Agriculture Network and Iowa State University. The name Women, Land and Legacy (WLL) is developed. Shortly after this meeting, ISU Extension, RD, and EMI left the committee. |
| | The listening session process was developed by the committee and approved by the SOC. |
| January 2004 | The WLL committee tested the listening session process at the Practical Farmers of Iowa annual conference and it was a success. Eleven women participated. |
| March 2004 | Five pilot counties were selected (Lyon, Howard, Cass, Marshall, Wapello). |
| 2004 | Local teams in these counties were developed and planning for listening sessions began. The WLL State Team met with each local team and led them through the planning process. |
| September 2004 | Howard County was the first county to hold a listening session, with 60 attendees. |
| By March 2005 | Each of the 5 pilot counties had held their listening sessions and conducted at least one learning session, based on what they heard at the listening sessions. The WLL State Team participated with support, guidance and facilitation. |
| End of 2005 | Seven new counties were ready to become involved in WLL. |
| June 2006 | The WLL State Team trained RC&D Coordinators to assist with the overwhelming workload to plan with local teams and facilitate listening sessions (in new counties). |
| September 2006 | An NRCS agreement was developed between NRCS and the National Catholic Rural Life Conference to assist in further developing WLL over 2 years. |
| December 2006 | A total of 15 listening sessions, including 22 counties, had been conducted. A WLL website was developed and launched. |
| | By the end of 2006, WFAN had left the WLL State Team and the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development joined the state team. |

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| | An approximate total of women served by WLL through Listening Sessions alone, by the end of 2006 = 800 |
| 2007 | The WLL State Team developed a Women, Land and Legacy Development Guide for use by local teams in planning and implementing the project. Additionally, a WLL brochure was developed and a 3-panel display. In 2007, NCRLC left the WLL State Team but Carol Richardson Smith remained on the team as an individual. |
| Mid 2007 | Listening sessions had been held in 37 counties. |
| October 2007 | The WLL State Team developed the report "Women, Land and Legacy: Results from the Listening Sessions", based on evaluations from women that attended listening sessions through December 2006. A full report, 8-page summary and 4-page summary were developed and made available publicly. |
| December 2007 | The WLL Development Guide was finalized and printed in hard copy and CD format. It was distributed to existing WLL Local Teams and used as new counties gained interest. |
| January 2008 | The NRCS member of the WLL State Team changed locations and received added responsibilities, which alter her capacity with WLL. |
| March 2008 | The WLL State Team held an event in Clear Lake, IA for several WLL local teams in northeast and north central counties. The goal of this session was to begin looking at leadership styles of women and to assist local teams with some leadership issues that had arisen as WLL progressed. |
| 2008/2009 | The WLL State Team began work toward a report to show changes in decisions and actions of women that had attended WLL learning sessions and changes in assistance provided to agricultural women by WLL local team members and learning session presenters. |
| | Requirements for core local team members changed. Originally, a member from NRCS, FSA and Extension at the local level were required. With Extension downsizing, their membership was no longer required. Around the same time, membership expanded to show more Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship - Division of Soil Conservation (DSC) and Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) involvement. |
| March 2010 | The original NRCS representative on the WLL State Team left the team and was replaced by a different NRCS employee. |
| November 2010 | The resulting report, "Women, Land and Legacy: Change Agents and Agency Change in Iowa" was published and publicized. It was highlighted in press releases and shared with agency leadership and partners. It received a tremendous amount of attention and developed interest in WLL by new counties. |
| | An approximate total of women served by WLL through Listening Sessions alone, by the end of 2010 = 1100 |
| April 2011 | The original NRCS representative on the WLL State Team rejoined the team, as the only NRCS member. |
| May 2011 | Two new counties, Iowa and Fayette, showed interest in becoming involved in WLL. |
| June 2011 | Fayette County held their listening session with 30 attendees. |
| August 2011 | Iowa County held two listening sessions with a total of 60 attendees. |
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| | In 2011, both Fayette and Iowa counties held learning sessions and Iowa County began work on a fundraiser cookbook. |
| Summer 2011 | An additional NRCS outreach employee joined the WLL State Team due to recent turnover/transition of the original NRCS member. |
| December 2011 | Leadership from USDA NRCS, FSA and RD met with the WLL State Team to discuss future goals of the project, funding and team membership. They suggested the team expand to include an RD employee for the first time, an IDALS Division of Soil Conservation employee, and to bring back a USDA National Agricultural Statistics employee. |
| February 2012 | The WLL State Team expanded to include the new members as recommended by leadership. |
| | The team began strategizing about development of a grant to reach future goals for the project. |
| June 2012 | A grant proposal entitled "Rural Community Development & Preservation through Women, Land and Legacy" was submitted to USDA RD. The goal of the grant project was to support local teams expand their success by providing leadership training and tools to expand to a new audience, women owned or co-owned small rural businesses. |
| September 2012 | The USDA RD grant was approved for 2 years. |
| November 2012 | The first issue of the quarterly WLL newsletter, "Rural Legacy", was distributed to local team members. |
| January 2013 | The WLL State Team met with the local teams from Tama and Iowa Counties to gather input for the development of the leadership training curriculum, as part of the grant. |
| 2013 | Through the grant, a statewide WLL Facebook page was developed and launched and the WLL website was updated and improved. |
| April 2013 | Several WLL State Team members assisted Jackson County WLL to move to a new level, through a listening session Phase 2 that resulted in the development of monthly (more frequent than the past) meetings based on current issues/needs. The leadership of these meetings was transferred to non-agency women. |
| June 2013 | Benton County became the newest WLL county and held a listening session with 25 attendees. |
| July 2013 | The WLL State Team conducted leadership training with the Tama County local team. The FSA representative on the WLL State Team retired and left the team. |
| August 2013 | The WLL State Team conducted leadership training with the Iowa County local team. |
| November 2013 | The WLL State Team presented the WLL process and findings at the Women, Food and Agriculture Network national conference during a breakout session. |
| December 2013 | Benton County held their first learning session. |
| February 2014 | Johnson County became the newest WLL county by holding two listening sessions with a total of 80 attendees. |
| March 2014 | Several members of the WLL State Team met with tribal staff of the Meskwaki Nation to discuss how the grant project will include the tribe. |
| April 2014 | The WLL State Team finalized the leadership training curriculum and created |

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| | an agenda for a webinar to launch the training statewide and to share other WLL resources available. |
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| | Preparations were made to launch the first county WLL Facebook page and Google Groups, as requested tools for local teams and women in their counties (Johnson County). |
| May 2014 | Planning for a new FSA representative to the WLL State Team in place. |
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| | Total number of women served by WLL through Listening Sessions alone, by May 2014 = 1300 |
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| Total Number of Counties that have participated in WLL | 42 |
| Total Current Active WLL Counties | 20 |