

Women, Land and Legacy Historical Timeline

2003 – October 1, 2020

Date(s)	Event(s)
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.

	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 altered 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 (from 2008/2009), "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.

	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 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

	an agenda for a webinar to launch the training statewide and to share other WLL resources available.
	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.
2014	A new FSA representative joined the WLL State Team.
	State Team members determined that a change in WLL leadership was needed, as they were unable to fulfill the coordination of WLL adequately. A conversation regarding this took place with the NRCS State Conservationist, and he proposed entering into an agreement to fund a WLL Coordinator position. It was decided that the agreement would be with the Women Food & Agriculture Network (WFAN).
	Total number of women served by WLL through Listening Sessions alone, by May 2014 = 1300
Total Number of Counties that have participated in WLL	42
Total Current Active WLL Counties	20
January 2015	The NRCS entered into an agreement with WFAN and funded the WLL Coordinator position, as an employee of WFAN. The WLL State Team continued as an advisory committee to the WLL Coordinator.
September 2015	Pocahontas and Buena Vista counties joined WLL in 2015. The WFAN WLL Coordinator left the position. The WLL State Team worked with the WFAN Director to prepare to select a new WLL Coordinator.
November 2015	A new WLL Coordinator was selected and began her duties. The Rural Development representative left the state team.
2016	The state team saw lots of changes with the addition of representatives from Conservation Districts of Iowa and Interfaith Power & Light. Additionally, there was a change in the IDALS-DSC representative and an additional IDALS-DSC representative joined. Madison, Calhoun and Dubuque counties joined WLL.
2017 and 2018	New counties that joined WLL included: Cedar, Muscatine, Scott, Buchanan, Mahaska, Marion, Butler, Bremer and Floyd. Past counties that were reinvigorated include: Benton, Emmet, Palo Alto, and Chickasaw.
	The website was updated and improved. The Women, Land and Legacy News quarterly newsletter was updated to a web-based newsletter on the WFAN website. More social media resources were developed for WLL local teams.
2019	The FSA representative left the state team due to a job change.
	Existing WLL teams were supported but no new teams joined WLL. It was a challenging year of uncertainty due to upcoming NRCS reorganization.
January 2020	One of the NRCS representatives left the state team due to a job change. A new NRCS representative joined the state team. A statewide virtual meeting was held for all local teams to network and to share ideas, resources and concerns.

2020	A new FSA representative joined the state team, as well as a representative of a private business, People's Company. She is the only certified woman farm manager in the state!
March 2020	COVID-19 hit, closing USDA and IDALS offices to the public for face to face assistance and shutting down portions of communities across the state. Any scheduled learning sessions had to be canceled.
July 2020	As requested by local teams, a statewide virtual training took place to cover multiple resources related to COVID-19. This was a statewide learning session since teams weren't able to host their own and all WLL participants were invited. Multiple presenters shared various resources available to those affected by COVID, especially agricultural producers.
	A virtual statewide learning session took place on the subject of Soil Health. Almost 100 women attended. There were multiple presenters including NRCS's new Soil Health Specialist. This was provided as a learning session since WLL local teams couldn't hold learning sessions in person.
August 2020	A virtual statewide learning session took place on the subject of lease agreements with good attendance. There were multiple presenters including the newest member of the WLL state team, the farm manager.
September 14, 2020	A new Outreach Coordinator was hired by NRCS. She will lead WLL in the future.
October 1, 2020	The WFAN WLL Coordinator agreement expired on 9/30/2020. The NRCS Outreach Coordinator will begin to lead all WLL efforts.
	Total number of women served by WLL through Listening Sessions alone, by 2018 = 1700
Total Number of Counties that have participated in WLL	54
Total Current Active WLL Counties	34