1000s of Acres:
Adding Conservation Partners

Angie Carter, Augustana College
Jean Eells, E Resources Group

Iowa Water Conference 2016
Rented land
Tend to be 65+ in age, inherited land they want to keep, have tenants.
Under represented in research

Under counted in surveys
Need and Want to say “Yes!” to conservation

Thousands of acres need nutrient reduction.

Women attending our programs own an average of 330 acres.

Can encourage tenants.
Traditional conservation meetings don’t serve women well.

*How can this be?*
We didn’t know...

• We’ve been using the wrong tools to reach women.
• North Dakota story
“Male” conversational style is presentation-based and confers status; can discourage interaction.

Lecture style confers status on the speaker
Older women often don’t feel comfortable learning in meetings with men present. They prefer to:

Create connections

Minimize differences
The “learning circle” approach builds relationships, trust, confidence.

Technical content is also presented
Learning Circle participant evaluation data

- 70% very likely to visit with other women about improving soil health
- 68% very likely to ask my farmer to help me improve soil health
- 73% very likely to visit with my farmer about a topic from the meeting
- 92% very likely to look more carefully at my land
86% reported an increase in confidence in overseeing conservation on their land
What might we learn from this important demographic?

Where are there opportunities to change the conversation about water quality?

How might we better reach women farmland owners?
Iowa has one of highest proportions of rented farmland in the U.S.

50% or more of IA’s farmland is currently owned by someone other than the operator and leased to a tenant

(USDA NASS 2012)
Social relationships are especially important in the implementation of conservation efforts on farmland\textsuperscript{1}

Landowners’ one-time decisions have multi-year consequences on the landscape\textsuperscript{2}

\textsuperscript{1}Barbercheck et al. 2012; \textsuperscript{2}Druschke and Secchi 2014
IA’s water pollution is also a SOCIAL problem

Given their historic exclusion in research, more knowledge about women landowners’ decision-making is needed
# 5 Learning Circles and 5 Field Days

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>LC Participants (n=72)</th>
<th>FD Participants (n=73)</th>
<th>Repeat Participants* (n=14)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northwestern</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeastern</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
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</table>

*Repeat participants attended both a Learning Circle & a Field Day
Total unique participants=131
## 26 Interviews

### Age Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>80s</td>
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<td>60s</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>50s</td>
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<tr>
<td>40s</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>30s</td>
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### Land Ownership

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sole owner</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-own w/siblings</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-own w/spouse</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-own w/parent</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Landowner Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-operator landowner</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active farmer/farm partner</td>
<td>5</td>
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</table>

### Marriage Status

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Status</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married/partnered</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
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### Distance from land

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-state</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out-of-state</td>
<td>5</td>
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</table>

### Acquisition

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Method</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purchased</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inherited</td>
<td>17</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
IA Landowner Survey

• Survey of IA landowners summer 2015
• Response rate of 41% (sample frame = 3,501; population = 48,562 from 33 counties)
• 43% Men, 54% Women, N/A 3%
What do we need to know about women landowners?

- Visit farmland less frequently
- Live further from farmland
- Fewer interactions with landowners of same gender
- Risk intimidation, experience exclusion
- Social networks important motivators for conservation engagement
I find it really difficult to find other women in my situation that do own farmland. Because I have tried going to the co-ops for coffee, and it doesn’t work. They just clam up...
Watershed Stories
Why Photovoice?

A participatory research method using photography and group dialogue to understand topics of importance to a community (Bell 2008)

Genevieve Kitchen
Cabin Creek and Coal

This picture makes a statement for Cabin Creek and West Virginia Coal. For 52 years, I've seen coal leave this state down train tracks like these. West Virginia is one of the richest states in natural resources, but most of the people in this state do not prosper from those resources.
Why the Raccoon River watershed?
Project Timeline

• October 2015: Two Learning Circles in Raccoon watershed
• Spring 2016: Two participant meetings
• May-June 2016: Community exhibit
Questions

Farmscape from WFAN *Navigating the Waters Women Caring for the Land* women farmland owner meeting