

Women Owning Woodlands Network Update

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Across the country, more women are taking the reins of forest management, as owners, stewards, and family members. These women are a historically underserved demographic who are making or influencing management decisions on millions

of acres of working forests. At the same time, our Extension culture is in transition from one of learning by receiving information to one of collaborative engagement and contribution. Observing these trends, a group of like-minded educators from around the United States came together to

create simple and relevant tools to facilitate peer-learning education for women woodland owners.

In Oregon, the WOWnet group started in 2005 and now boasts 430 members in 10 counties. Nicole Strong, the Oregon WOWnet founder/coordinator and national team leader, accepted a new job starting August 1 as Oregon State University Forestry and Natural Resources Extension agent for Deschutes, Crook, Jefferson counties, and Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs. A new WOWnet coordinator should be hired by OSU this fall.

This past spring, the national team conducted multi-day training events for women woodland owners in Oregon, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and Arkansas. All of these events combine technical forest management sessions, peer learning opportunities, and classes related to leadership and sharing our stories. As one participant stated:

“As a forest landowner and as someone who loves our property, stewardship for future generations is my top priority. Being with other women was important to me because I think women approach forest stewardship a little differently.”

The national team also published a “Peer Learning Toolkit” through OSU that is available online: <http://ir.library.oregonstate.edu/xmlui/handle/1957/42036>. You can also request print copies from your local Forestry Extension agent.

We recently presented at the Association of Natural Resources Professionals conference in Sacramento, California, and hosted a workshop at the National Tree Farm Convention in Pittsburgh, PA in July.

As always, you can learn about upcoming events and read stories from women woodland owners at <http://www.womenowningwoodlands.net/> ■



CREDIT: N. STRONG

Women walking through a riparian forest learn how they might manage for complexity and stream health on their own properties.