

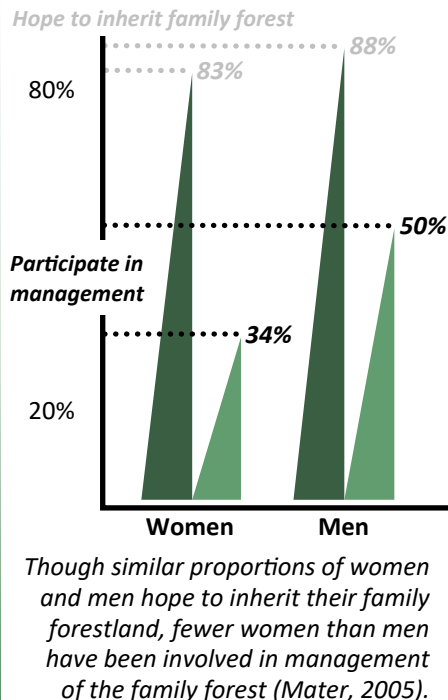
Growing your landscape impact:

Improving Engagement of Women Woodland Owners

WHY WOMEN?

Women are a large and growing part of the landowner population

The percentage of family forest ownerships where a woman is the primary decision maker doubled from 2006 to 2013. These women make decisions for **44 million acres** of America's family forest land. Furthermore, women usually represent one half of joint ownerships, suggesting the potential to contribute to the choices made on many more millions of acres (Butler, et al., 2017).



Women care about the health, beauty, and impact of their land

The main reasons women own their land are beauty, wildlife habitat, nature protection, legacy, and water protection (Butler, et al., 2017). Women tend to see their land for its holistic value—in terms of benefits for the environment, community, and economy (Redmore, 2009). Despite this, women are significantly less likely than men to participate in management activities (Butler, et al., 2017) revealing a prime opportunity to engage this audience.

Women will likely make the final land use decisions. In the US, women tend to outlive men, with a life expectancy of 81.2 years, while men live 76.4 years on average. This means that it is likely that final land use decisions, including selling or dividing land, will be made by women (Butler, et al., 2017) underlining the need to engage this audience.

WOMEN NEED NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO GET INVOLVED

Programming designed to be more inclusive of women gives women the chance to learn about land management in a comfortable setting.

"[Women woodland owner programs] remove the fear factor, reduce the feeling of being all alone—not knowing anything. They allow women to see that this can be fun and educational."

—Lyn Rajala, landowner and MN Women's Woodland Network member

Research conducted by Catherine Mater revealed that the challenges of land ownership are more significant for women than men (2005). Despite this fact, outreach efforts to engage landowners in forest management programs have not reached women as successfully as men. While women cite "lack of knowledge" as a primary barrier to owning forestland (Pinchot Institute for Conservation, 2006) they may not attend conventional landowner programming because they feel that it is not directed to them (Redmore, 2009).

Developing programs that are geared toward women—where women feel comfortable to ask questions, share goals, and practice technical skills—provide much-needed opportunities for women to gain the knowledge and establish the confidence that leads to empowered and informed land management decisions.



Photos: NRCS Oregon