

# SAVING AMERICA'S WORKING LANDS

A National Conference Hosted by American Farmland Trust

**DALLAS, TEXAS | APRIL 23-25, 2025**

## **Plenary Session: Meeting Challenges; Seeking Opportunities**

### **SPEAKERS**



#### **Lesli Allison**

Executive Director

Western Landowners Alliance

Lesli is a founding member and chief executive of the Western Landowners Alliance. She was also a founding member of the Chama Peak Land Alliance. For the past three decades, Lesli has worked extensively with private landowners and multiple stakeholders to advance conservation, sustain working lands and support rural communities. Prior to Western Landowners Alliance, Lesli managed a large ranch in the southern San Juan Mountains of Colorado. During her 16-year tenure, she implemented progressive conservation management through award-winning programs in restoration forestry, prescribed fire, grazing, stream restoration, hunting and wildlife management, and scientific research and monitoring. Lesli holds a B.A. from Columbia University and an M.A. from St. John's College, Santa Fe.



**Ben Gordon**

CEO

Fractal Agriculture

Ben Gordon is the CEO of Fractal Ag, a farmland investment platform that brings investors alongside farmers to drive impact and returns. Ben previously co-created Corteva Agriscience's carbon program while also leading Business Development. His background includes experience in agriculture technology, management consulting, and private equity due diligence. Ben previously served as an Infantry Officer in the US Army. He was raised in North Dakota where the original family homestead is still farmed by extended family. He lives in San Francisco, CA.



**Sarah Fulton-Smith**

Senior Vice-President Lending

AgTrust

Mr. Wiethorn serves as Senior Vice President of Lending for AgTrust Farm Credit and Regional President over the Western Region which includes Stephenville, Cleburne, Abilene, and Sweetwater branches. He was previously the Credit Office President in the Waco Credit Office, where he began his career as a loan officer trainee in June 1999. He has 23 years of experience with the Farm Credit System. He earned his Bachelor of Science degree in agricultural economics from Texas A&M University. He lives on a farm outside of McGregor with an operation consisting of cattle, corn, wheat, and rental property. He is married to Kathy Wiethorn, has two teenage children, and they are

members of First United Methodist Waco where Mr. Wiethorn serves on the finance committee.



*Facilitator*

**Jenny Lester Moffitt**

Senior Fellow

American Farmland Trust

Jenny Lester Moffitt is deeply committed to caring for the land and the people who farm it. She serves as Senior Fellow at American Farmland Trust, bringing decades of experience in agricultural policy, conservation, and food systems transformation. As Senior Fellow, Jenny's work focuses on enhancing the vitality of rural America by supporting farmers and ranchers in building diverse, profitable, and resilient farming operations now and into the future. Most recently, Jenny served as the Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs at the U.S. Department of Agriculture – the first woman to hold this position. At USDA, she championed efforts to create market opportunities for U.S. producers and safeguard agricultural and natural resources. Previously, Jenny served as Undersecretary at the California Department of Food and Agriculture, where she led the state's climate-smart agriculture initiatives. A fifth-generation California farmer, Jenny grew up on her family's organic walnut farm and processing operation, later returning to lead sales and marketing before becoming Managing Director. Jenny holds a degree from Brown University and is a graduate of the California Agricultural Leadership Program. Notably, her career in agriculture began at American Farmland Trust as a conservation and farmland information specialist. Jenny lives in Washington, DC, with her husband and their teenage daughter.