

Who Owns Rural America?

Interdisciplinary Land & Water Workshop



Primary workshop date: July 12, 2023 in Lincoln, Nebraska
(with possible before/after extension depending on interest and availability)

In-person only (no remote participation planned)

Workshop Objectives

The central question of this workshop is how land, water, and other natural resources are being reshaped – and their ownership reimaged – in a time of rapid climate change, growing inequality, and shifting racial and other demographics across rural spaces. Important recent scholarship has documented growing “land grab” dynamics across North America, including not only the financialization of farmland but also related changes in housing, water, and other resource markets. This workshop will probe the causes, consequences, and potential responses to the growing divide between local resources and local livelihoods. Although this workshop is directed principally toward these landscape changes as they are encountered across rural America, we actively invite and encourage related work on commodification, concentration, and other changes in land and natural-resource relations in other contexts and spaces.

A range of research methodologies and approaches could be deployed to address these land and resource dynamics. A primary object of this workshop is to uniquely connect in direct conversation social scientists working in related disciplines (such as geography, anthropology, sociology, history, political science, and economics) with critical legal scholars working in property, land use, water law, natural resources, and related disciplines. To that end, confirmed participants include:

- **Vanessa Casado Pérez**, Professor of Law and Research Associate Professor of Agricultural Economics, Texas A&M University
- **Madeleine Fairbairn**, Associate Professor of Environmental Studies, UC Santa Cruz
- **Levi Van Sant**, Assistant Professor, School of Integrative Studies, George Mason University
- **Anthony Schutz**, Associate Professor of Law, University of Nebraska College of Law
- **Jessica A. Shoemaker**, Professor of Law, University of Nebraska College of Law

Workshop Format

The workshop format will include time for each participant to introduce briefly their existing work and expertise and to receive feedback on—and engage in formative discussion around—an in-progress or early-stage research question or idea. Applicants may propose to share any type of early-stage draft related to these workshop themes for circulation to workshop participants in mid-June: a research prospectus, outline, or abstract; a book prospectus; an article manuscript; or even a grant proposal.

Scholars already actively working on these research questions are also invited to propose participation without a draft for workshop, if they are so inclined, and may participate as valuable workshop

commentators or in more open-ended roundtable and workshop discussions on key questions and future research trajectories.

Submission Requirements

Interested participants should email to Jess Shoemaker at jshoemaker@unl.edu (1) a current CV or short informal biography that highlights the scholar's expertise and current related work and (2) if applicable, a brief abstract of what they propose to submit for feedback at the workshop (no more than 500 words). For scholars who seek to participate without workshopping a draft of their own in-progress work, a short statement of what they hope to gain from, or contribute to, the workshop would be helpful. All applications to participate are **due by March 1, 2023**.

The goal of the workshop is to include a diverse range of scholars at all career stages and across disciplinary and geographic boundaries, and participants will be selected to best facilitate a robust discussion and active research engagement.

Timeline

Applications are due March 1, 2023, with decisions soon thereafter.

Once accepted, drafts for circulation to workshop participants will be due June 15, 2023.

The primary workshop discussion will occur on July 12, 2023, in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Depending on interest and availability, an optional field trip to the nearby Homestead National Historical Park may be arranged before the workshop on July 11, 2023. If participation warrants, further conversation and roundtable discussion may be offered into July 13, 2023.

Funding and Other Logistics

At this time, we expect workshop participants will provide their own travel to Lincoln and fund their own lodging while here, though we plan to arrange for discounted accommodation options for workshop participants in a convenient hotel block. The Rural Reconciliation Project will provide workshop space and hosting services, some meals during the workshop, and assistance with any local travel (locally to or from the workshop or meal spaces, if needed, and any field-trip offerings provided). If this self-funding requirement presents a significant hardship, please reach out.

Any questions about the workshop can be directed to Jess Shoemaker at jshoemaker@unl.edu.



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