



In March of 2015, Laura Guertin wrote a blog post for AGU that highlighted ESWN and its benefits. Laura is a Professor of Earth Science at Penn State Brandywine in Media, PA. Her research focuses on how technology can enhance teaching and student learning in introductory-level geoscience courses for non-science majors. Her blog focuses on geoscience education/outreach, science communication, and technology tools in the classroom, online, and in the field.



# The Earth Science Women's Network (ESWN) [Women's History Month]

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Posted by Laura Guertin

For the month of March, in honor of [Women's History Month](#), I am dedicating my weekly blog posts to the outstanding organizations, resources, and inspiring stories about women in STEM.

I can't think of a better way to kick off Women's History Month than to celebrate the incredible impact the Earth Science Women's Network ([ESWN](#)) has made on the careers of over 2,000 female students, faculty, and researchers across the globe. The story of ESWN began in 2002, when six female early career scientists came together and quickly realized that their own peer-mentoring network was a model that would benefit the larger community. The National Science Foundation and AGU provided essential support for a full ESWN web-based network, which anchored ESWN's establishment as a non-profit organization in 2014.

*ESWN Mission: To increase the diversity of the earth science workforce and community and improve the retention of women in earth science professions by promoting career development, building community, providing opportunities for mentoring and support, and facilitating professional collaborations.*

I became a member of ESWN two years ago (there are no annual dues – membership is free). It was through word-of-mouth that I heard about the organization, and at first, I'll admit that I wasn't in a rush to sign up. I felt comfortable in my career and with my existing professional networks – what else could ESWN possibly offer me? It turns out, I couldn't have been more mistaken about the value of the "WN" in ESWN. I finally created my online account and started exploring the discussion forums, which are private and for members-only. I quickly saw how open and honest the questions and responses were. And it didn't take long for me to realize that I had some of these same questions and other that I never felt comfortable enough asking even my closest colleagues.

ESWN also offers women the opportunity to be involved at various levels, whether it be with the online discussion forums, or organizing socials at conferences, or even serving as a leader in the organization. I started an online group for "Lone Rangers – when you are the only one in your discipline," and the information sharing and conversations among the members of that group are so helpful in realizing that I am not really alone? There are additional ESWN groups based on geographic region (national and international), area of scientific research, employment, and issues for women (Moms on the tenure track, what to wear as a science professional, etc.).

Although membership is limited to women, ESWN offers many valuable resources freely available to everyone. Current and previous [newsletters](#) are online, as is the co-ed listserv for [Earth Science Jobs](#). The [ESWN Member Spotlights](#) are valuable for us to share with not just the female students in our department, but with all students.

I have gained so much from ESWN in such a short time, and I know I will be turning to the network often in the future as I continue to advance through my career. I look forward in not only "taking" from the ESWN network, but also now "giving back", especially helping those that might not realize the value of having multiple networks for personal/professional growth, including those involving women in STEM.