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WARNER COLLEGE
OF NATURAL RESOURCES
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

April 2026



A Note from the CCC Director

Water in the West is a wicked problem: a complex challenge that defies resolution. With the Colorado River—which is in a perilous state after a warm, dry winter—much of the focus is on the “[realities](#)” of the situation. For example, last year’s [Essential Pillars for the Post-2026 Colorado River Guidelines](#), co-authored by several prominent experts, sets out seven policy and technical solutions. Less often, we hear [Why Colorado River Negotiations Stalled and How They Could Restart](#) in which the authors describe the five most common sources of conflict: values, data, relationships, interests and structure.” Data (the “realities”) and structure (policy and technical solutions) are essential elements, but without addressing values, relationships, and interests, the path forward is perilous. There is no easy solution to the Colorado River challenge,

yet, watching negotiators miss deadline after deadline, I am struck by what appears to be a lack of leadership.

[*Leadership Without Easy Answers*](#) describes how conventional views of leadership often start with authority and influence. In contrast, author Ronald Heifetz suggests principles of leadership “apply to anyone who itches to get something done through and in company with others.” In contrast to the command-and-control leaders, [*Are You a Collaborative Leader?*](#) defines a leader as someone with “the capacity to engage people and groups outside one’s formal control and inspire them to work toward common goals—despite differences in convictions, cultural values, and operating norms.”

[*Practicing Collaborative Leadership*](#) describes how this approach is a natural fit for partnerships because, in collaboration, no single person or group is in charge. [*Together, We’ll Go Further: The Opportunity of Collaborative Leadership*](#) makes the case that collaborative leadership is vital to achieving conservation goals that tend to be complex and large-scale. Johnson and co-authors note that “One important avenue that has not been adequately addressed is improving our individual and collective ability to collaborate.”

[*Mastering Leadership*](#), the leadership book I recommend most often, describes an “outer game” and an “inner game” of leadership. The “outer game” consists of leadership processes and leadership competencies. Leadership processes include planning, decision-making, generating and allocating funding, getting things done, and measuring impact. Leadership competencies underly processes and include information gathering, setting direction, engaging stakeholders, ensuring focus and follow through, and managing differences. The “inner game” is about leadership consciousness, including self-awareness, systems thinking, emotional intelligence, values, and an approach to life and work centered on purpose, courage, and vision.

[*Collaborating Consciously: the Four Cornerstones*](#) offers a useful framework for thinking about leadership consciousness in a collaborative context. Author Amy Mickel writes that because participants share power in a collaborative process, anyone who participates is a collaborative leader, and that “becoming an effective collaborative leader (i.e., participant) is a process involving conscious awareness and commitment to transforming on a deeper level.” In other words, all of us who work in collaborative conservation are leaders, and we all need to do the outer work and the inner work.

Be well,

John

News from the CCC



CFCN x The Ponderosa Mountain Pine Beetle Task Force

In February 2026, the [Colorado Forest Collaboratives Network \(CFCN\)](#) hosted a **Branching Out session on the Ponderosa Mountain Pine Beetle Task Force** (herein, the Task Force). After a [panel presentation](#) from the Task Force co-chairs (Department of Natural Resources Director Dan Gibbs, Colorado State Forest Service Director Matt McCombs, and Division of Fire Prevention and Control Director Mike Morgan), attendees on the call moved into breakout groups to discuss what the Task Force should know.

We had nearly 50 people in attendance, including employees of community-

based organizations, non-profits, state agencies, utility companies, the wood products industry, and more. Most were engaged in at least one collaborative in Colorado.

We had some excellent conversations, and the priorities of Colorado Collaboratives were spoken clearly. See below for more!

Key Takeaways



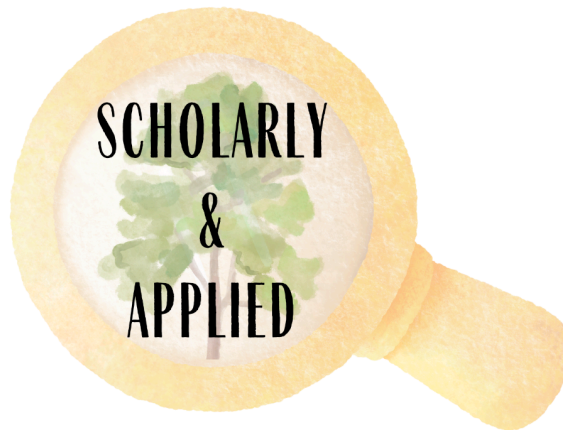
North Sand Creek Restoration Scope

The North Sand Creek Restoration Partnership is gearing up for a full summer of implementing our restoration strategy. We recently invited landowners and agency partners to hear from our stream expert, Shawn Conner at Bio-Logic, about his comprehensive restoration plan for the North Sand Creek, which includes building low-tech process-based restoration structures that will trap sediment and prevent it from being carried downstream. **This meeting set the stage for planning this summer and fall's restoration season,** during which we hope to work with a contractor to start installing these structures.

Our scope of work for this year includes constructing in-channel structures in the upstream reaches of the North Sand Creek and rehabilitating some of the dune areas that used to be off-highway vehicle trails through the woods, meaning less sand will ultimately be destabilized and blown by wind into the stream channel. We will accomplish these goals by **coordinating with the Bureau of Land Management and Colorado Parks and Wildlife seasonal employees** to lay logs and debris in bare patches, reduce erosion, and to stage restoration areas by felling trees that will be used in instream structures. We also have one restoration volunteer event planned for mid-May with WRV, who will build on last year's start, installing low-tech process-based restoration structures on the stream before we decide on a restoration contractor to take on most of the physical implementation.

The partnership is making progress toward accomplishing our goal of improving in-channel sediment control systems in the North Sand Creek!

Scholarly and Applied Impact



Here we review research to guide our practice. Please [reach out with suggestions](#) for what we should cover! **CCC Fellows and staff are indicated by bold font.**

Highlight: The CCC Fellows Program

The CCC Fellows program allows Fellows to **learn about and experience principles of collaborative conservation** in real-world settings. Next week, we are excited to welcome our [Cohort 16](#) Fellows with an immersive three-day

training retreat. During this time, we'll dive deep into the [Five Foundations](#) of collaborative conservation, exploring topics like engagement strategies, situation assessments, facilitation considerations, process considerations, leadership styles, strategies and considerations for managing conflict, and decision-making frameworks.

Mentors Matter

Many of us have experienced the power of mentorship and the ways in which it jump-starts personal and professional growth, provides guidance and support, builds confidence and resiliency, and creates pathways to future opportunities.

Now's your time to give back! We've added a mentoring component to the Fellows program, and we are currently seeking mentors for [Cohort 16](#)! We're looking for a diverse array of mentors with a wide range of experiences and expertise.

Check out the [Mentor Letter of Invitation](#) for more information and reach out to allison.brody@colostate.edu with any questions.

- Allison Brody, PhD

Our Associate Director of Learning

Notes From the Field



Here we take short explorations of the CCC's projects, on-the-ground engagement, research, and what we are learning along the way!

The focus this month is: Confluence 2026

Confluence 2026 is a national gathering for collaborative conservation practitioners, researchers, students, and emerging leaders working across differences to address complex social and environmental challenges. **Taking**

place May 19–21 at Colorado State University in Fort Collins, CO, Confluence is designed around connection, dialogue, and shared learning rather than traditional panels and presentations.

- This year's theme, *The Future of Collaboration: The Power of Working Across Divides*, comes to life through skill-building sessions, place-based field trips, mentorship, and honest conversation across career stages and disciplines. Discounted registration is available through April 30.
Registration closes May 5, don't wait and register today!

- Aireona Raschke, PhD
Our Associate Director of Practice

[Learn More](#)



Other News and Opportunities

OSU Seeking MS Graduate Research Assistants | The Conservation and Human Wellbeing Lab (part of the Human Dimensions Lab) at Oregon State University is seeking two MS students to contribute to research on socio-cultural impacts of harmful algal blooms (HABs) in Puget Sound, Washington State. The students will be funded as Graduate Research Assistants (4 terms/year) for up to two years. One student will focus on the use of AI to analyze publicly available data. The other will use in-person data collection tools (encounter surveys and interviews). Data will include the myriad direct and indirect pathways through which HABs impact shoreline visitors, seafood harvesters, shoreline homeowners, and coastal residents. Applications open: May 1, 2026. Start date: September 15, 2026 To apply, inquire with Kelly.biedenweg@oregonstate.edu. [Learn more about the lab](#)

Call for Submissions, Echoes of the Earth Film Festival | Amid intensifying ecological crises and critical engagement with the Anthropocene, ecological cinema has gained both urgency and visibility. We invite filmmakers, artists, anthropologists, and scholars in film and cultural studies whose work engages the intersections of art, ecology, and research. *Registration opens: March 30, 2026, Submission deadline: May 15, 2026, Notification of acceptance: June 15, 2026.* [Learn More Here](#)

New Paper in Environmental Conservation | Paige West of Columbia University has just posted an insightful paper that may be of interest to those in the collaborative conservation field. She evaluates Büscher and Fletcher's *The Conservation Revolution*, focusing on the strengths and limitations of the book's critique of fortress, neoliberal, and neoprotectionist conservation paradigms, namely arguing that it lacks global relevance. [Read here](#)



FACILITATION, ENGAGEMENT, AND COLLABORATION IN ENVIRONMENTAL CONFLICTS

MARCH 10-12, 2026 // PORTLAND, OR

MAY 12-14, 2026 // BOULDER, CO

CDR ASSOCIATES
COLLABORATIVE DECISION RESOURCES

Elevate Your Skills in Facilitation, Engagement, and Collaboration

The 2026 Facilitation, Engagement, and Collaboration in Environmental Conflicts training offers practitioners a unique opportunity to enhance their professional skills relating to work in transportation & mobility, public lands use, water resources, and disaster resilience. Participants will:

- **LEARN:** Equip yourself with the tools to intervene, facilitate collaboration, and build relationships to stimulate change
- **APPLY:** Sharpen facilitation and engagement skills through hands-on activities and low-stakes simulations that mirror real-world challenges
- **ENGAGE:** Dive into purposeful dialogue, inspire new ideas, and co-create solutions to today's challenges
- **NETWORK:** Connect with other professionals and create connections with practitioners and leaders

Who should attend?

Professionals in transportation, land use, emergency management, conservation, and public engagement roles. Whether you're a facilitator by title or practice, this training is designed to elevate your work.

Location: Museum of Boulder, Boulder, CO

Dates: May 12-14, 2026

Tuition:

- Early Bird: \$1,100 (**Early Bird pricing ends midnight (MT) on March 31, 2026*)
- Non-profit and Tribal Organizations: \$1,100
- Regular: \$1,300

Space is limited! [Register now](#) to secure your spot.

Finally, join Women in Wolf Conservation at Avogadro's Number in Fort Collins, CO, on Tuesday, April 21st!

JOIN US TO CELEBRATE

WOMEN IN WOLF CONSERVATION

APRIL 21, 2026

6:00 - 8:00 PM

AVOGADRO'S NUMBER
FORT COLLINS

FREE ENTRY

Join us for an evening panel discussion with researchers, advocates, educators, and change-makers who found their way to the front lines of Colorado's wolf restoration program.

Six remarkable women will share the jobs nobody told you about, what led them here, what this work actually looks like, and how they turned passion into purpose. Come ready to be inspired, ask questions, celebrate successes and rethink what a career in conservation can look like.

Featuring speakers from

- Colorado Parks and Wildlife
- Colorado State University
- Defenders of Wildlife
- Working Circle



SCAN HERE



[RSVP Here](#)

Jobs

Check out the CCC's [Job Board](#) for a list of jobs focused on natural resources and collaborative conservation!

Here are just a few postings shared through our board:

InterTribal Buffalo Council: Zapata Ranch Preserve Buffalo Herd Manager

| The Zapata Herd Manager will be the primary individual responsible for overseeing the buffalo herd at The Nature Conservancy's Zapata Ranch Preserve in south-central Colorado, in close collaboration with TNC. This position is FULL TIME in Mosca, CO. [Learn more](#)

Denver Urban Gardens: Bilingual Contract Youth Educator | The Youth Educator will be an integral part of the Youth Education Team, delivering DUG

programs for ECE – 5th graders at schools and youth organizations across metro Denver. This role will also support in the creation and management of educational materials for youth programs. This position is paid as an INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR for Denver, CO. Must be proficient in English/Spanish. [Learn more](#)

Bitterroot Water Partnership: Community Engagement Coordinator | The Community Engagement Coordinator plays a vital role in strengthening Bitterroot Water Partnership's (BWP) connection with our community, volunteers, partners, and donors. This is a PART TIME HOURLY position based in Hamilton, MT. Position closes 4/30/2026. [Learn more](#)

If you have job openings that are aligned with our work on collaborative conservation and you want us to share them, submit them to our [job board](#).

If you think a colleague would find value in reading CCC news, please forward this email to them and invite them to subscribe to our email list using the form at the bottom of the [CCC home page](#).

If you feel moved to support our work supporting conservation, please consider [donating to the CCC](#).

Questions? Ideas? Opportunities? Please email the CCC Director [John Sanderson](#).

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The CCC Team



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