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WARNER COLLEGE
OF NATURAL RESOURCES
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

February 2025



A Note from the CCC Director

"Look at your fish." This was my first assignment as a student in the Field Naturalist Program at the University of Vermont. The assignment was based on [an essay about observation published in 1874](#). On the surface, the essay is about being a naturalist. I have since come to see the essay as containing lessons about life, lessons that are particularly relevant at this moment of change. *My question: how do we observe clearly and comprehensively to understand the world as it is so that we can find a path forward?*

The entire scientific enterprise is rooted in observation. The conclusions reached using the scientific method are subjected to a peer-review process that, although imperfect, holds scientists accountable to drawing conclusions

that are supported by the data. In the social realm in which collaborative conservation takes place, we don't have a formal system, so those of us who lead collaborative processes need to pay extra attention to ensure we draw good conclusions we can act upon.

In the essay "*We Swarm*" from the book [How Far the Light Reaches](#), Sabrina Imbler makes two key points about observation. Imbler writes about a 28-foot humpback whale stranded on a beach that attracts media attention, while on the same beach piles of salps—a small free-floating marine invertebrate— attract no attention. The point: some things get noticed easily while others get overlooked. Imbler also shares how swarms of salps and jellyfish are perceived by some to be increasing, and this increase is taken as a sign of our changing climate and degraded oceans. That sounds like a plausible story, but it's not true, according to [this peer-reviewed article](#) in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. Perceptions that there has been a steady increase in swarms is based on incomplete information. The point: if we don't take care to ensure we see the full picture, we risk reaching misleading conclusions.

Since January 20, a flood of changes in federal policy and budgets point to big impacts on conservation. Universities like Colorado State where I work are being hit with a lot of uncertainty. Many non-profits are anticipating less funding and are being told that even funding they have been promised may not arrive. Because I am so close to these communities, I have spoken with many people in recent weeks who are feeling uncertainty, fear, and anger. While striving to care for those being affected, I am also trying to observe even more closely, with particular attention to perspectives that don't align with mine. *My hope: that we can continue to create opportunities to work across differences to create a world where conservation is rooted in mutual relationships that recognize the inherent worth of nature, individuals, and communities.*

Be well,



News from the CCC



Announcing: Fellows Cohort 15!

The CCC is proud to announce Fellows Cohort 15! **Cohort 15 consists of 16 Fellows pursuing 5 conservation projects working with communities in 4 countries:**

- Here in **Colorado**, two women will leverage the connection between people and place to address soil and water issues impacting Conejos County producers, many of whom have been farming and ranching in the San Luis Valley for generations.
- In **Ghana**, where a the white-thighed colobus monkey is highly endangered, a local conservationist (*Veronica, pictured*) will work with community members to develop a species conservation action plan to protect the colobus monkey in ways that also protect local livelihoods.
- In **Brazil**, a PhD student (originally from Brazil and now studying in the US) will work with her team to support the environmental governance of the Waimiri Atroari people. She believes that advancing culturally relevant conservation in this way is an important part of protecting the Amazon.
- In **Kenya**, an established conservationist will work with a local team to document traditional knowledge of plants used for food, medicine, and other purposes. This will benefit indigenous communities and strengthen

her local organization's ability to respond to the local needs of people and nature.

- In **Honduras**, a PhD student will work with CSU faculty and local community members to collaboratively develop environmental management plans for the Lake Yojoa Protected Area. They believe that local participation in decisions is essential to the future of the lake.

Check out their stories and missions in our [press release](#).



CCC & the CLTL Program

As the CCC wraps up our 5-year strategic planning discussions, we are reiterating the importance of sharing knowledge and of learning to our mission. This means engaging with and providing opportunities for CSU students, among other things. In my time so far as the North Sand Creek Project Assistant, I have gleaned innumerable pieces of wisdom both from my own conversations and from conversations I have watched others navigate. In return, student employees like me bring fresh perspectives and questions to the CCC's world.

The skills I am gaining in [WCNR's Master of Conservation Leadership](#) (CLTL) degree program align perfectly with the goals and activities of the CCC. **CLTL**

students have often been involved in CCC projects and workshops because there is so much overlap in the issues we tackle and methods we use to problem-solve. In fact, as part of CLTL's "Collaborative Conservation" course, Allison (*CCC Assoc. Director of Learning*) is currently leading a three-part workshop about facilitating conservation collaboratives: from planning, to implementation, to evaluation and reporting. She is also working with one of my classmates on his capstone project. The CCC knows that as soon-to-be conservation practitioners, students interfacing with experts and educators in the field is invaluable to our learning.

- Julia Lankisch

*Our North Sand Creek Project Assistant
CSU Master of Conservation Leadership Student*



New Year, (Mostly) the Same WCCN!

To start 2025, we're sharing some [important changes for the Western Collaborative Conservation Network](#) (WCCN), initiated at the end of last year, in order to **right-size the network**. After long discussions and reflection, we concluded that some parts of the WCCN are working great, while other parts aren't delivering much value; as such, **we've decided to focus on what's working and let go of what is not.**

Find out what's changing and what's sticking around!



North Sand Creek Project Update

The North Sand Creek Project is gearing up for our first summer of restoration work. As the collaborative works toward long-term erosion and water quality solutions, it is important to measure our progress. This means ironing out the details of a thorough monitoring plan, which John (CCC Director) has been writing with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Ducks Unlimited, Dr. Ellen Wohl of CSU Geosciences, Denver Botanic Garden, CSU Drone Center, and other partners. We plan to **survey vegetation on the dune slipface and creek sediment dynamics using cameras and drones**, which will tell us if our restoration efforts have been successful.

Meanwhile, Allison (CCC Assoc. Director of Learning) has been collaborating with BLM and an off-highway vehicle (OHV) education nonprofit called Stay the Trail (STT). STT will work with BLM to **create clear, eye-catching trail maps for OHV users** that include safety and regulatory information. Allison is providing the educational information to explain why staying on the trail is good for ecosystems, local communities, and recreationists alike. Since there are many Spanish-speaking folks who recreate on the trails, the map information will be in both Spanish and English.

Finally, a celebration - one of our funders, the Colorado Water Conservation Board, featured us in their [2025 Water Plan Progress Report](#). **Yippee!**



Let's Work Together for Our Forests!

Katie (our Colorado Forest Collaboratives Network Coordinator), **along with the Colorado Forest Health Council and many partners, helped create the Colorado Forest Resilience Planning Guide**. It's a framework for agencies, private landowners and local collaboratives so we can all align our forest management strategies, use resources effectively and sustain forest health. **Forests across Colorado provide invaluable social, economic and ecological benefits, and the best way to ensure their resilience is through coordinated efforts.**

Access the guide [here](#), and keep up with the Forest Health Council [here](#)!

(photo by CSFS at CFC Summit 2023)

Access the CO Forest Resilience Planning Guide

Get to Know the CCC



Rest in Love, Atti! (2015-2025)

Atticus Finch ("Atti") was a peach-faced lovebird from Arizona City who looked after a little flock of two humans (Aireona and her husband) and one younger bird (Kiwi).

Atti passed away suddenly in January 2025. He is sorely missed by his family; he has left an indelible mark on all the people who loved him, and the CCC team misses his presence in our digital gatherings. **Atti brought joy to many a meeting with his flights straight at the camera, mid-chat snuggles, and endless curiosity.** He left the world with a little more love for birds after he showed many people just how loving, silly, and smart they are. His family will never be the same without him.

Learn more about Atti and the other furry, feathered, and serpentine friends of the CCC [here](#).



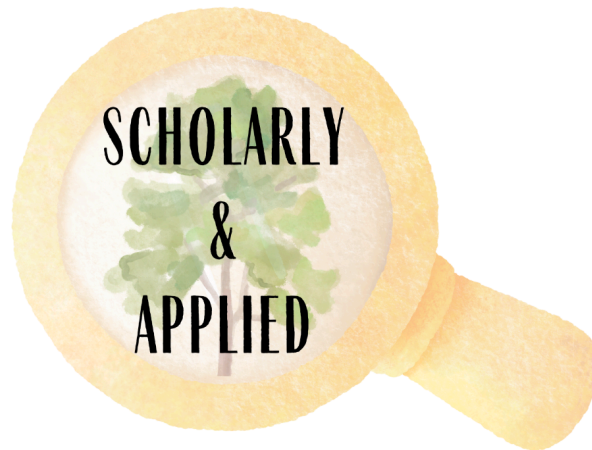
Meet our CCC Affiliate: Audrey Clavijo

Audrey combines her passions for continuous learning and the complexities of human dimensions of natural resources to bring a curious, creative, and empathetic perspective to her work in facilitation and dispute resolution with [CDR Associates](#). Audrey completed a Masters of Environmental Leadership (M.S.) from CSU's Conservation Leadership Through Learning program while working as the Communications Coordinator for the Center for Collaborative Conservation.

Audrey's work is grounded in collaborative problem-solving and interest-based negotiation to generate durable solutions within the realms of land-use, water, and transportation. **Many of Audrey's projects have an environmental sustainability and stewardship focus** (e.g. collaboratively seeking solutions to climate change impacts in Native Alaskan communities or collecting public

input on the balance between recreation and wildlife conservation to determine management of Colorado's open spaces).

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.**

Cohort 10 Fellows [projects](#) all addressed various aspects of human/wolf conflict in Colorado, and many of these former Fellows are still involved with this pertinent issue.

For example, **Mirielle (Ray) Gonzales** (who also serves as a mentor for Cohort 14) was recently featured in an episode of Rocky Mountain PBS's [This American Land](#) talking about wolf reintroduction in Colorado. This is a meaningful episode showing that there is more to this issue than conflict. Ray explains that *“there are a variety of people throughout the state that are reaching across the aisle and collaborating to find positive solutions.”*

Collaborative conservation works by finding out what people know and think about a situation, as well as what really matters to them. Cohort 10 Fellows **Rae Nickerson, Alex Few, and Stewart Breck** are all co-authors on a recent article exploring [U.S. livestock producer interest in alternatives to compensation programs for wolf depredation](#) (Human Dimensions of Wildlife 2024, [reach out to Rae for a copy](#)). Here, the authors wanted to dig into whether programs that provide compensation for livestock killed by wolves *“improve the economic viability of ranches.”* By asking ranchers via surveys, interviews, and focus

groups, the authors found that many respondents believe *“that indirect losses caused from predator-induced stress are as, or more, financially damaging than when wolves kill livestock”* and reported several challenges to qualifying for compensation. However, they found that overall those interviewed and surveyed are open to compensation programs that offer *“diverse payment and engagement options that effectively address the needs of different operations.”*

- 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:

[Centering Well-being in 2025](#)



For many of us, now is a time to reflect on the past year, and plan for the new year. Resolutions are one way to set goals to strive for in the coming months, and something that I find helpful is setting intentions. I attempt to weave my intentions into everything I do.

This year, it’s my intention to center the well-being of people (including myself!), and to focus my energies on moving our field towards being a more nurturing place to be. I believe that by caring for ourselves and our communities, we will make our conservation outcomes more impactful and enduring.

My intentions are closely linked with a collaborative opinion piece called Kinder Conservation (more on those in the coming months!). My colleagues and I reflect on the essential, core importance of people in our collaborative work.

The skills that the collaborative conservation field requires can offer us some amazing tools for centering well-being, including trust, relationship building, and thoughtful facilitation.

1. **In fostering trust**, we seek to understand our own needs and the needs of others, and co-create spaces where those needs can be met in caring ways.
2. **In relationship-building**, we parse out shared goals, hold space for connections, and find resources together. We create community around shared problems and solutions.
3. **Through thoughtful facilitation**, we seek to create spaces where people feel appreciated, valued, and encouraged to share their perspectives.

So, my focus this year will be bringing the expertise of our field into more than how I run meetings. I want to use these skills in ways that support the well-being of myself, my team, and our partners in everything we do.

What are your intentions for 2025? And how does your collaborative practice inform them? [Let us know here.](#)

- Aireona Raschke, PhD

Our Associate Director of Practice



Other News and Opportunities

February Storyteller's Circle | In a joint effort between the Center for Collaboration and Intermountain West Joint Venture, conservationists from nonprofits, state and federal agencies, and emerging leaders have come together to learn, network, and support each other. These virtual sessions will

be in the capable hands of Nicole Reese at [Crowd Conservation](#) going forward! This February, join Carrie Van Horn at Heartwood Visuals for a discussion on increasing science engagement through illustration. We will meet February 27th, 2025 from 3-4 p.m. MST. [Register here](#) and [Subscribe](#) to the Storyteller's Circle mailing list if you'd like to keep up with these events in the future!

Network for Landscape Conservation Webinar | The Network for Landscape Conservation's upcoming webinar, in partnership with Trees Water and People, will be on February 20th at 1:00 PM EST! Join us for the screening of a short film entitled [In the Right Hands: Trusting Community to Guide Philanthropy](#). Following the 10-minute film, we will invite a panel bringing funder, organization, and community voices into discussion around trust-based practices in conservation and stewardship. [Read more and register here](#)

COCO After the Flames LA Resource Guide | COCO extends its heartfelt support to all individuals and communities affected by the recent wildfires in Los Angeles. We recognize the immense challenges faced during such devastating events and have compiled this guide to provide essential resources and tools for recovery. Remember, recovery is a journey, and you are not alone. Please visit aftertheflames.com to access the ATF Quick Guide in English and Spanish.

In Fort Collins! Rhino Conservation for Community Empowerment in Zimbabwe | The Community Rhino Conservation Initiative is reintroducing rhinos to Zimbabwe in a way that serves the local communities and promotes environmental sustainability. From 6-8 pm on Wednesday, February 19th, "*Rhino Conservation for Community Empowerment in Zimbabwe*" will be presented at the Global Village Museum of Arts and Cultures in Fort Collins. Mark Butcher, Managing Director of Imvelo Safari Lodges, will discuss how wildlife conservation and community tourism can benefit each other. Tickets are \$15, with refreshments and wine served starting at 5 pm. [Reserve your spot here.](#)

Native Plants Conference Poster Session Opportunity at CSU | The 10th annual Landscaping with Colorado Native Plants (LWCNP) Conference will be held at Lory Student Center at Colorado State University on March 8, 2025. The conference planning committee is excited to extend a poster session opportunity to students and researchers from CSU (and beyond) to attend the conference and present their work/efforts surrounding native plants and/or native plant conservation efforts between conference sessions. All selected

presenters will be offered free registration to the conference and a spot to display their poster. [Apply and learn more 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:

Program coordinator III - Bilingual Park Naturalist, Westminister Open Space | The Program Coordinator III – Bilingual Park Naturalist position is responsible for facilitating environmental education programs for children ranging from kindergarten to middle school through the Junior Ranger Academy program funded by the Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) Inspire grant. Gain basic medical certifications, express your creativity in designing programs, and work closely with youth in Westminister to create impactful experiences!

[Learn more and apply](#)

Mid-Senior Landscape Designer/Sales Manager, ClimateScaping | Join the ClimateScaping team in Boulder County to develop beautiful and functional landscaping projects that utilize native plants for ecosystem bolstering, fire-consciousness, and water conservation! If you're someone who geeks out over sustainable landscaping and knows your way around CAD, this is your chance to create eco-friendly designs that WOW.

[Learn more and apply](#)

2025 Bird banding internship, Klamath Bird Observatory |

This internship opportunity is designed in accordance with North American Banding Council (NABC) standards to prepare participants for successful careers as field ornithologists! The Bird Banding Intern will contribute to KBO's growing long-term land-bird monitoring program. This position requires independent drive and patience for the travails of fieldwork but also affords an amazing opportunity to build practical experience in field biology and master a variety of bird monitoring and research skills in a beautiful part of the country.

[Learn more and apply](#)

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 [supporting the CCC with a donation](#).

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

Be well,
The CCC Team



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