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WARNER COLLEGE
OF NATURAL RESOURCES
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

September 2025



A Note from the CCC Director

With last week's violence, there is understandably deep concern about violence as a way to deal with differences. Violence makes headlines. Although collaborative conservation rarely makes headlines, it offers both good news and a path to resolving differences we can all choose.

The CCC team has the privilege of working with people across the globe working to connect across differences, build trust, and address natural resource challenges. This week, 150 of these people will gather at the [Colorado Forest Collaboratives Summit](#) to grapple with forest health and wildfire challenges. This year's theme—*Designing for Uncertainty, Thriving in Community*—recognizes that the work is not easy, but by working together we can navigate

differences and move forward together.

In a 2011 paper, Daniel Kemmis and Matt McKinney describe “[collaboration as an emerging form of democracy](#).” They draw on centuries of history to suggest that ordinary people have a substantial capacity to overcome differences and discover common ground. In a similar vein, the Salazar Center for North American Conservation recently invited guest authors [to share their views about this type of democracy in action](#).

In one essay, [Jonathan Peterson writes](#) that collaborative conservation “is a uniquely powerful exercise in democracy, given that it is rooted in the notion of common ground . . . literally . . . [landscapes] that we can share and walk through and live upon.” He writes that landscapes support the building and strengthening of “. . . the human-to-human connections, relationships, and trust that undergird our capacity to work through the complexity of difference.”

In a similar vein, Rick Knight and Eric Glenn [write about the urban-rural divide](#), a rift that “can be overcome only when we recognize . . . the interdependencies that bind us.” They urge us to join “the thousands of watershed and community-based programs around the country [to] . . . respectfully listen, respectfully disagree, and in the end, find common ground to promote sound communities, viable economies, and healthy landscapes.”

In her essay “[Collaborative Conservation: Building Habits of Democracy](#),” Lynn Scarlet writes that she is a “troubled optimist.” Troubled because the issues are increasingly complex. Optimistic because, “in the efforts of collaborative conservation lie the foundations not only of conservation but of democracy itself.” Even with grizzly bears, water rights, and other difficult issues, she has observed people navigate deep divisions by “building knowledge, respecting diversity, listening, building relationships, searching for workable solutions, and engaging with a strong dose of humility.”

In a recent conversation about this troubled moment, my friend Shawn Johnson ([Center for Natural Resources and Environmental Policy](#)) shared his experience that people coming together in community to find a path forward provides not only solutions to tangible challenges, but also “a positive place of hope and healing.” Shawn also shared a quote from Brandon Small who is [working to restore Buffalo within the Northern Cheyenne tribe's lands](#): “When we work together, good people with good hearts can do good things for our community.” I agree.

Be well,



News from the CCC



Upcoming CDR Associates Event

Check out the CDR's facilitation course in Boulder, CO this October!

Looking to level up your skills in facilitation, engagement, and collaboration? Our friends at CDR Associates are hosting a dynamic **3-day training, October 21–23, 2025**, at the Museum of Boulder.

Designed for folks working in **natural resources, transportation, disaster resilience, and community building**, this hands-on training offers tools, strategies, and real-world practice to help you navigate conflict, lead inclusive dialogue, and build lasting partnerships.

Space is limited, so don't wait!

[Register Now](#)



Water Leadership Summit

The summit, hosted by the [Colorado Water Center](#) and made possible through the generous support of the Walton Family Foundation, is a one-day event that equips community members with the knowledge, skills, and resources to engage in water decision-making and take action on issues that shape Colorado's water future.

The summit will provide resources, real-life examples, and practical steps for those interested in learning how policies are developed, how to engage in local and state decision-making, how to serve on boards and commissions that influence water planning, and how to effectively communicate about water issues.

- **Date:** September 23, 2025
- **Location:** CSU Spur, Hydro Building, 4777 National Western Dr, Denver, CO 80216
- **Time:** 8am – 5pm
- **Cost:** Free

[Register Now](#)

Service Learning Trip in North Sand Creek Project

One of the unique challenges the North Sand Creek Restoration Partnership faces is learning to communicate effectively with off-highway vehicle (OHV)

users who recreate at the North Sand Hills. As the user group has shifted over the past 10 years to include more Spanish-speaking families, addressing communication gaps has become especially important to our project.

If we are going to create interpretive messages that resonate with the public, whose help we need to steward the land, we must first get to the bottom of their connection to it. Over Labor Day weekend, a group of Colorado State University graduate students and young employees accompanied by Allison (Associate Director of Learning) and Julia (North Sand Creek Project Assistant) journeyed out to the North Sand Hills to investigate.

After receiving a training about audience-centric communication from Allison, our majority-bilingual volunteers crafted strategies and questions to understand the value systems of OHV users. We settled on an approach that centered around one essential question: "what brings you back to this place?" We had conversations with OHV'ers in both Spanish and English, asking questions and listening about what matters to them and how they feel about the fence protecting the creek bed.

Our volunteers also had the opportunity to learn about the project directly from collaborators - our partners at State Line Ranch, CSU's Geosciences department, and Colorado Parks and Wildlife all connected with them over the course of the weekend.

The Center for Collaborative Conservation was incredibly lucky to have an incredibly generous group of volunteers. They brought passion and fresh perspectives to this work, asking thoughtful questions and reflecting on their experiences with intention and keen discernment. We are so grateful for their time, expertise, and insight!

-- Julia Lankisch

*CSU M.S. Environmental Leadership '26
CCC North Sand Creek Project Assistant*



Restoring Wolverines to Colorado

This summer, Colorado State University Extension, CSU's Center for Human-Carnivore Coexistence, and Defenders of Wildlife has been hosting a series of in-person and virtual events across our state to inform Coloradans about the reintroduction of wolverines, approved last May through the Restoration of Wolverines Act.

The main goal of these events is to increase public knowledge about wolverines, why they are being reintroduced, what this means for Coloradans, and how CPW plans to restore them.

Last events of the series are on September 18th and 20th via zoom.

[Sign Up Here](#)

Get to Know the CCC



Baby on board!

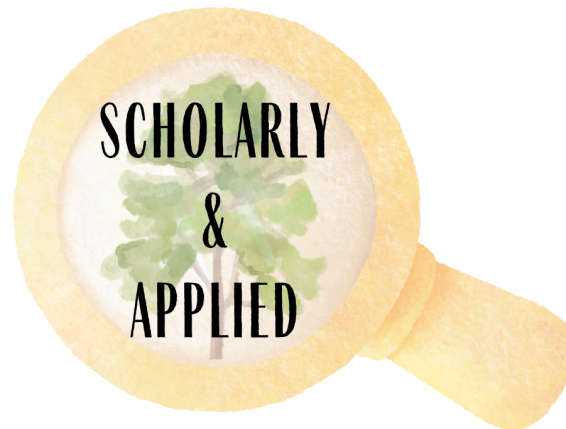
This year will look different in terms of who will be welcoming you and overseeing the events of the 2025 CFC Summit. Katie has played a significant role in getting the planning started and is now on a well-deserved break for the

next few months. Here's a note from Katie with a special announcement, along with a *new* last name, too:

"Hello CFCN! I am very pleased to share that we welcomed our baby boy, Owen, in July. The whole family is doing well and enjoying spending time together. I am sending all my best and look forward to catching up at the end of the year!"

-*Katie McNovak* (new family name), CFCN Coordinator

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.**

Each year, CSU's Warner College of Natural Resources hosts the [Pathways Human Dimensions of Wildlife Conference](#) to "address the myriad issues that arise as people and wildlife struggle to coexist." One thing I heard several times during this year's [Pathways](#) is that while most coexistence approaches deal with the direct conflict between people and wildlife, most coexistence issues actually stem from conflicts that are happening between people.

So, it's not surprising that I heard repeatedly about the importance of trust and relevancy. For example, in her session: "Mistrust of science: Trust and credibility's changing dynamics," Dr. Cristi Horton explored the connection between credibility and trust. We often think of credibility as a relatively

straightforward, static concept, but it is actually a construct that is “co-created within each situation” based on the relationship between the “trustee” and the “trustor”. Gaining credibility means creating “a set of expectations that, when met, increases message effectiveness and enhances trust.” Importantly, credibility isn’t just about expertise; goodwill and honesty also make up how credible one is perceived to be. In fact, in many collaborative conservation situations, we should elevate the perception of honesty and goodwill over that of expertise – something that requires us to craft our communications to be relevant to each of our partners. (Check out her latest [paper](#) on the topic.)

Trust and relevancy are also related to fairness. In the session “Connecting people, wildlife, and nature: Ethical approaches to sustainable conservation” Dr. Barbara de Mori pointed out that when we make decisions to help solve coexistence issues, we need to “reconcile the interests of wildlife, ecosystems, and human communities.” How do you evaluate trade-offs that “balance ecological, ethical, and social considerations”? She and her colleagues advocate the use of [ethical assessment tools](#) to create a decision-making framework based on fairness, addressing the needs of the animals, the people, the land, and other entities that have a stake in the decision. The approach finds out what each stakeholder needs to be respected, and what needs to change in order to address the issue from their perspective.

Pathways 2025 was packed with many other powerful sessions, and brought together some really amazing people doing amazing work.

- 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:

Reflecting on the Future of Collaborative Conservation

This past month, I've been involved in several different conversations about the future of collaboration, and I want to share some thoughts about this topic that have been inspiring me.

To start, I've been working with some colleagues in the conflict resolution field on a future of collaboration panel. There is a very real feeling that "collaboration is dead" among some of our audience. I found this revelation to be surprising, because while we have been under an onslaught of challenges this year, the people in my neck of the woods have not expressed this to me. While there is no simple answer to what we are experiencing, I see many organizations coming up with innovative solutions. Building bridges and working together is our best chance as a community to continue to make change under these circumstances, while also searching for pathways to find common ground. One of the goals of our panel is to give people the opportunity to share what has been working for them.

In August, I also had the opportunity to join the [Network for Landscape Conservation](#) and their partners (and my friends!) at a retreat focused on the future of our field. We discussed key places that leaders such as myself and many others are feeling need attention and evolution. Funding was a major component of our discussion, as well as how to communicate collaborative successes and lessons, and enhancing collaborative capacity (with empathy). Upon reflection, what has most struck me by this experience is the power of being in community and mapping out a vision together.

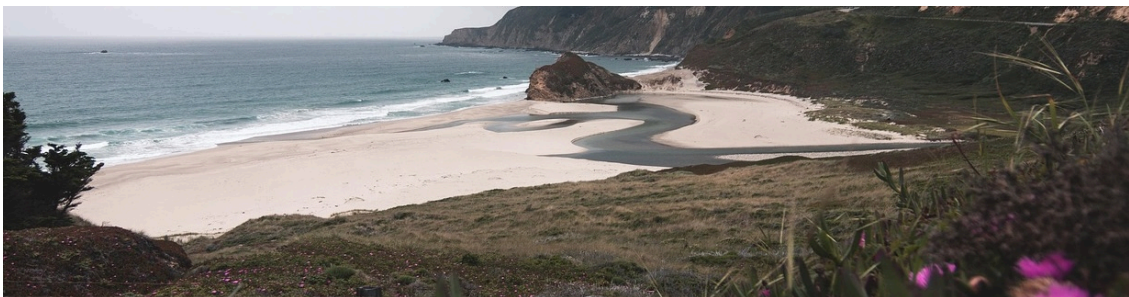
This power has been used by others to cause many of the challenges that we are now faced with, and I was inspired by Dylan Skybrook ([Santa Cruz Mountains Stewardship Network](#)) to think about how we can use that same force to enact change for the good of our field, our communities, and the Earth. When we create change together, that change tends to be enduring.

We talked at length about what Joanne Marchetta ([Zephyr Collaboration](#)) described as a North Star. In my mind, this became a question of, what is the world that we are working on creating together, and how do we get there? I now think about this often – what will unify our work, help us support one another, and to lean into creativity, openness, and kindness? I look forward to finding and creating these answers with many of you, and I know from all of these conversations that the answers are there within this community.

And I want to leave you with this (please forgive me for the expertly placed plug!) – the [Western Collaborative Conservation Alliance's 2026 Confluence](#) (Fort Collins, May 19-21, 2026 – details coming soon!) is also going to be focused on the future of collaboration – specifically, on building bridges across divides. And I hope that you might join us to share your experiences, your successes and your challenges, to learn together, be together, and join another conversation about attaining the future we want for our field.

- Aireona Raschke, PhD

Our Associate Director of Practice



Other News and Opportunities

River Smart Network | The [River Network](#) is excited to announce the release of the [River Smart Communities Guidebook](#), a resource designed to help

communities develop a roadmap for Integrated River Management (IRM) and apply the River Smart Community framework. The guidebook features case studies, best practices, and tools to support holistic river management. See *also--upcoming workshops, trainings, and events!*

CEJ Call for Proposals | The Center for Environmental Justice at Colorado State University is hosting a global hybrid conference to continue the dialogue and inspire action on environmental justice. *We invite proposals* for papers, performances, events, and panels across the full scope of society and nature, encompassing all spatial and temporal scales, and all perspectives. [More information here](#)

Montana AWRA Conference | Registration is open for this year's [Montana AWRA \(American Water Resources Association\) annual conference](#). Students and water professionals alike are invited to attend, and those interested in providing oral or poster presentations are encouraged to [submit presentation abstracts](#).

MFCN 10th Annual Workshop | The [Montana Forest Collaboration Network \(MFCN\)](#) brings people together to improve forest and grassland restoration, conservation, and resource use. On November 6–7, 2025 in Missoula, MT, this free workshop provides an opportunity to share knowledge and strengthen partnerships that benefit Montana's landscapes and communities. [Sign up Here](#).

TxWAC Project Map | Explore the [Texas Water Action Collaborative \(TxWAC\)](#) Project Map to find conservation projects with measurable natural resource benefits across the state. Whether you're a conservation organization or funder, TxWAC project matching services start with learning more about you and your needs.

- Take [this survey](#) by September 19 if you have a project that needs funding.
 - Take [this survey](#) by October 10 if you are a looking to fund a project that fits your goals.
-

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:

Colorado Parks and Wildlife | CPW is excited to open applications for State Park Officers and District Wildlife Managers! Looking for passionate individuals who will play a vital role in their mission to perpetuate the state's wildlife resources and provide quality parks and outdoor opportunities for all. This opportunity is live through *September 30th, 2025!* [Learn more here](#). Questions? Want to chat? [Register](#) for the CPW webinar and Q&A TODAY at 6:30PM MST.

Bimini Shark Lab Internship | Research, field experience, and learning with sharks and their ecosystems in the Florida Keys. [Learn more here!](#)

Natural Resources Coordinator, Larimer County Extension | Limited term, managing and planning for natural resource based initiatives in Larimer County, Colorado. This is a great opportunity for individuals with broad natural resource interests to be creative and impactful. This job is a *remote/in-person hybrid*. Closes on 9/21/2025. [Learn more](#)

GIS Program Manager, Sonoma Land Trust | Want to play your part in protecting our local communities from the impacts of climate change? Ready to roll up your sleeves to help achieve tangible results? Want to be part of a talented, deeply committed, and nationally award-winning conservation organization? [Learn more here!](#)

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](#).

Be well,
The CCC Team



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