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May 2026



A Note from the CCC Director

This spring, the CCC and the Colorado State Chapter of the Society for Conservation Biology piloted the [Common Ground Fellowship](#). During this Fellowship, 12 students received an immersive introduction to collaborative conservation, including connecting with leaders from Montana to Brazil who are collaborating to solve real-world problems in their communities.

In their final presentations, the students shared paintings, songs, a children's book, stories, collages, and a game. One participant captured what I felt when they said the projects "revealed something about the soul of the person." Through their work, the students shared insights that I believe conservation—and all of society—could benefit from.

With a song she wrote for Amish children, Abby shared how valuable it was to connect with practitioners and learn from their years of experience.

Sydney created a game called [Ranchers for the Range](#) that is available for teachers to use in the

classroom; you win if you take care of both your cattle and the land.

Cecilia created a yin-yang drawing showing nature and cities inextricably linked. She and, with a separate project, Andrew both shared that “if it takes a long time, you are probably doing it right.”

Mikayla, with a story about traditional ovens—“hornos”—in the Jemez Pueblo, told the story of baking bread as a metaphor for collaborative conservation, including “trust the process . . . if you rush it, you ruin it.”

Saleh wrote a children’s book about a community of critters dependent on a river that had stopped flowing. By stepping back and seeing the whole river, the critters realized “we are stronger together.”

With two colorful paintings, Flynn encouraged us to talk with those who see the world differently and to move from our heads to our hearts.

Maddie, working on the under-appreciated plains of eastern Colorado, reminded us to “love where we live.”

Lyssa shared a quote from Martin Carcasson, a leader in collaborative problem solving: “Common Ground is not the goal. It already exists. We just need to learn how to use it.”

With a short story about a proposed reservoir where common ground has been elusive, Jonah reminded us that power matters, even while working to collaborate.

Mia, with a short video, reminded us that we are all connected and “We must never break the chain.”

Threaded throughout the presentations was a theme Avery stated directly, “Relationships are so important.”

One of the practitioners who generously shared their experiences with the students was Silvia, a participant in the CCC’s long-running [Fellows Program](#). Describing her conversations with students, Silvia captured my feelings exactly: “I left every conversation feeling energized and hopeful, and their curiosity, creativity, and genuine commitment to finding common ground made a real impression on me. I was especially inspired by the passion and interest these young conservationists bring to the work. Seeing the ways they are already thinking deeply about relationships, collaboration, trust, and community gives me a lot of hope for the future of conservation”.

Be well,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John". The signature is stylized with a large, looping 'J' and a cursive 'ohn'.

News from the CCC



Confluence 2026 is this week!

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.

Registration is now CLOSED. We can't wait to see those who plan to attend!

[Learn More about the Event](#)



Branching Out with the CFCN

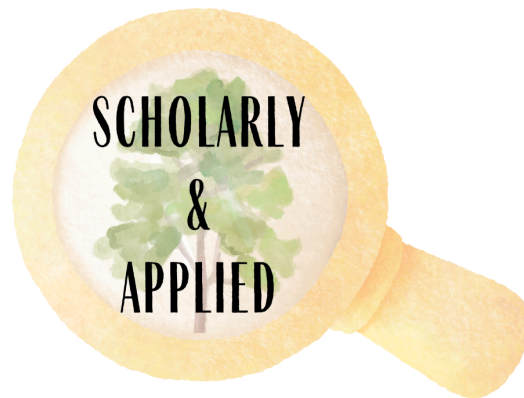
Part 2: How Impact Resonates (hearing from public and private sector funders)

Building on what we learned from session 1, in this session, a panel of public and private sector funders will provide insight on how they interpret and evaluate communications from collaboratives, including which metrics, messages, and partnership narratives are most compelling for funding decisions. Participants will gain insight from funders on what makes communications compelling and credible, and how to align your messaging and metrics with funding priorities.

We will meet Tuesday, May 26, 12:00 - 1:30pm | [Registration Link](#)

[Read about the Colorado Forest Collaboratives Network](#)

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.**



For this month's Scholarly & Applied section, I thought I would reflect on our role in teaching people the practice of collaborative conservation. For example, during our 18-month Fellowship program, the CCC designs learning and skill-building opportunities in ways that complement and inform the experience of planning and implementing on-the-ground Fellows projects. We do this through a cohort learning model, which emphasizes learning from each other's diverse perspectives and context, and involves building community, peer-to-peer interactions, and a network of support.

Over the course of three days in April, twelve Fellows from Cohort 16 participated in our in-person training retreat at Snow Mountain Ranch, a YMCA facility located in the high country south of Rocky Mountain National Park - check out a fun video [here](#). Among other things we delved into the foundational practices of collaborative conservation; conducted situation assessments; explored dimensions of collaborative leadership, trust-building, engagement strategies, and process design; and looked at different participatory methods for evaluation. As one Fellow reflected, it was helpful to have "so much valuable information and the chance to connect with a global cohort" while another Fellow said that "the most useful part of this training for me has been how I can work with my communities and team as a collaborative leader - how does this look in my context and what leadership approaches can I adopt to work better with people?"

Because one Fellowship program is clearly not enough, this semester the CCC, in partnership with the [CSU Chapter of the Society for Conservation Biology](#), created a new Fellowship program called the **Common Ground Fellowship**. As described by John in his note, twelve CSU students (both undergraduate and graduate) participated.



We provided skill-building sessions, then connected the students with four practitioners who volunteered to be mentors for this program. The Common Ground Fellows interviewed these practitioners, who shared their experiences with collaborative conservation and offered wisdom and advice. One of these practitioners shared that “Honestly, I feel like I gained just as much from the students as they may have gained from me. The conversations were thoughtful, energizing, and genuinely memorable.”

We were able to celebrate our Common Ground Fellows this past Friday at a showcase event, where each Fellow presented an original project that they created. As CCC’s Office Assistant Lizzy Camp put it: these projects “made me look at what we do at the CCC in a different way - it opened my mind to what collaborative conservation can be; what collaborative processes can look and feel like.”

- 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!

With our Associate Director of Practice, Aireona Raschke, hard at work making Confluence 2026 the best it can be, she shares with regret that there will not be the usual "Notes From the Field" section this month.

In lieu of her piece, I thought we would share an inspiring interview she did with [On Land](#) about her work with Western Collaborative Conservation. You can read more about it and watch the recording below!

[Watch it here](#)

Other News and Opportunities



Global Environmental Justice Conference Report | The Center for Environmental Justice at Colorado State University is proud to share the success of the 2026 Global Environmental Justice Conference, *"Where Do We Grow from Here: Environmental Justice and the Politics of Hope in the Planetary Age,"* held April 13–14, 2026. Organized in collaboration with global partners, the conference brought together researchers, advocates, practitioners, students, and community leaders from around the world to strengthen collaboration and advance environmental justice work across disciplines and borders.

The conference featured 361 speakers across 56 sessions and six workshops, with nearly 700 total registrants participating both in person and virtually. Strong participation from CSU faculty, students, staff, and Colorado-based advocates highlighted the university's growing leadership in environmental justice research and practice. Thanks to the generosity of sponsors and donors, the conference fully covered operational costs, supported attendees from around the world, reduced barriers for students, and sponsored the screening of the documentary *Sallie's Ashes* during the 11th Annual ACT Human Rights Festival.

As the conference concludes, organizers are now focused on post-conference initiatives, including publication projects, podcasts, presentation archives, expanded research collaborations, and continued efforts to strengthen global environmental justice networks ahead of the next conference in 2028.

View the [Full Conference Program](#)

Conference Website

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:

Preserve Manager for the Center for Natural Lands Management (CNLM) | The Preserve Manager will practice on-the-ground conservation of populations of rare and endangered species using science-based principles and adaptive management. Full time position, based in Northern California – Sacramento/Davis area. [Learn More](#)

Soil to Supper Director and Manager for Quivira Coalition | Two positions open! Soil to Supper is a grant-funded program that helps livestock producers in the Southwest build financial resilience and market access through practices that improve soil and water health. Funded through October 28, accepting applications until June 15th, 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](#).

Be well,
The CCC Team



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