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WARNER COLLEGE  
OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

## December 2023



### A Note from the CCC Director

On Monday, Colorado Parks and Wildlife began reintroducing wolves to Colorado by releasing five wolves from Oregon. If you want to learn more about wolves, I still recommend [Colorado Wolves](#), a packet of information about wolf biology and history, wolves and livestock, human safety, and more, produced by the [Center for Human-Carnivore Coexistence](#), in collaboration with the [Center for Collaborative Conservation](#) and [Colorado State University Extension](#). And if you missed it the first time around, I also still recommend [Wolves in Colorado: Science and Stories](#), a pandemic-era webinar series presented by the CCC and the [Institute for Science and Policy](#). In this series, I particularly recommend [Episode 3: Community Perspectives & Conflict](#) for insights into the tension around wolves and [Episode 5: The Experience of Living with Wolves](#).

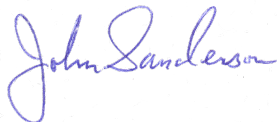
The topic of wolves is emotionally charged. Being able to navigate emotions is critical to collaborative conservation, especially where there are intense disagreements about right and wrong. Not long ago, emotions were considered something to be controlled by our rational selves. Now emotional intelligence (EI) is considered fundamental to getting things done together. If you are curious about EI, I recommend spending 45 minutes listening to [4 Business Ideas That Changed the World: Emotional Intelligence](#) from Harvard Business Review's IdeaCast. If you want to go deeper, there are many resources available to assess and strengthen your own EI, as I did recently using [this tool](#).

Also on the topic of emotions, I was recently fascinated by [How to Understand Emotions](#), a podcast featuring neuroscientist Lisa Feldman Barrett, a global leader on how our brains create emotions. After listening to this podcast, I better understand how fully intertwined our "emotional" and "rational" sides are. I gained even more insights by reading Dr. Feldman Barrett's [Seven and a Half Lessons about the Brain](#), a short, easy-to-read book that might shake up what you think you know about how your brain works.

I hope you are finding value in the resources, connections, opportunities, and stories the CCC shares. Below, our staff share several highlights from the past year. None of this would have been possible without our many partners, including you. We are deeply grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with you on this vital work. Also, none of this would have been possible without financial support. As the year ends, it would mean a great deal to me if you would consider making a tax-deductible gift to support the CCC, as we in turn support many others around the globe. You can [donate online](#) or [contact me](#) to discuss other ways you support and get involved in our work.

I wish you a happy and peaceful end to 2023 and a fantastic 2024.

Be well,



John Sanderson



## A Year in Review at the CCC



## Fellows Program

At its core, collaborative conservation is a learning endeavor. We are grateful for the opportunities we have had this year to **share many learning experiences with our CCC Fellows**, and to see how learning manifests through collaboration in the impressive work the Fellows are doing across the globe.

We began the year with a 2.5-day training retreat with Cohort 13, with one Fellow commenting that **“the teachings were right on point. The trainers were well-vested with the knowledge they shared with us. The training was an eye-opener in a lot of things. I learnt a lot.”**

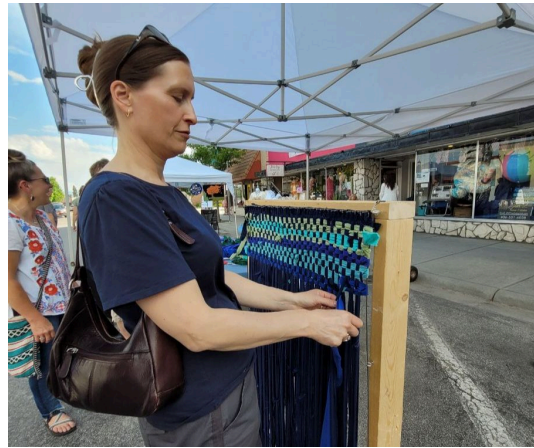
Cohort 13 Fellows projects model different ways that learning happens through collaboration to create conservation impact:

- **Learning with and from community through workshops, educational initiatives, community surveys, focus groups, and interviews.** “Gathering insights from the community ensures that our research remains relevant” (Team Botswana).
- **Learning through understanding and incorporating local knowledge systems into decision-making.** This happened in many ways, including in Cameroon where team members engaged with communities to learn about “totemic (culturally significant) species.” And Team Ecuador paused before collecting water samples so that community members could “get permission from the water itself, from the mountain” by offering flowers, song, and sharing their plans. “We asked Pachamama if we could draw samples from the water. She said yes.”
- **Learning through understanding and restoring socioecological systems.** This happened through participatory mapping, citizen science, camera traps, water sampling, and community-led restoration projects.

To learn in this way, [CCC Fellows](#) utilized interpersonal skills (communication, listening, and asking great questions), modeled a problem-solving mentality, and approached communities with collaborative intention.

**We are so proud of the ways our CCC Fellows exemplified how a “multifaceted approach that combines ecological, sociological, and technological elements” is needed to address complex issues** (Team Botswana). We look forward to continuing to learn with and from these projects through August 2024!

- Allison Brody, D.A., Associate Director of Learning





We are excited to invite you to the West's premier **collaborative conservation** gathering. This year we will be focusing on **stories of success, funding, and building bridges among communities.**

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**EVENT HIGHLIGHTS**

<p><b>PEER-TO-PEER LEARNING</b></p> <p>Participate in active learning sessions with expert leaders, peer support, and spaces to share your work.</p>	<p><b>FIELD TRIPS</b></p> <p>Explore the landscape and collaborative work in Southern Arizona.</p>
<p><b>COMMUNITY-BUILDING</b></p> <p>Come together with some of the most exceptional people in the collaborative conservation field.</p>	<p><b>MENTORSHIP MATCH</b></p> <p>Sign up to be matched with a mentor or mentee for Confluence 2024.</p>







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## Western Collaborative Conservation Network

The Western Collaborative Conservation Network ([WCCN](#)) has been very busy this year, **building our community and exploring the complexity and potential that is encapsulated in collaborative conservation.**

Our Emerging Leadership Working Group, in partnership with [Crowd Conservation](#), gained funding for a coordinator who will support the group in **developing a mentorship best-practices toolkit.** We are in the process of hiring someone for this position currently, and we are very excited to welcome them to the WCCN team.

This year we **launched a GIS Working Group**, inspired by conversations at Confluence 2022. The group will provide support to GIS professionals in collaborative conservation, as well as to **provide a place for the WCCN community to come for help in using GIS and other spatial tools for your**

**work.** There were two workshops/webinars hosted by the GIS group this year that provided key learning opportunities to our community and beyond.

We wrapped up a [situation assessment](#), which involved interviewing a sub-set of WCCN partners about the realized and potential value of the network, and their perspectives of our network's strengths. From this process, we've identified where the Network's niche lies. With the support of the steering committee and our working groups, **we are leaning into WCCN's ability to serve as a platform for community-building, and as a space for peer-to-peer learning.**

We have also been participating in a variety of regional and national discussions among network-of-networks, like WCCN. And **it is clear that we are in an exciting time of transition for the collaborative conservation field.** In many cases, we agree that the conceptual value of collaborative work has been widely accepted, and now we are moving into a time of developing synergy among network-of-networks, strengthening our areas of impact, and navigating the big challenges that face people across our field.

**We are in the midst of planning for Confluence 2024** with an amazing planning committee from across the West and Arizona – where we will be hosting Confluence. We hope that you will come [join us in Tucson on April 2-4, 2024!](#) **We will be exploring successes, bridge building, and fundraising together, and through it all, connecting with one another.**

Thank you so much to everyone who has made this exceptional year possible.

- Aireona Bonnie Raschke, Associate Director of Practice

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## Colorado Forest Collaborative Network

In early 2023, we released a [Regional Forums Summary Report & 2023 Work Plan](#) and used it to guide our work in 2023. **Our key categories for work included: building & maintaining the network, policy connections, and information sharing**, particularly focused on funding & capacity.

In April, **we launched our monthly Branching Out series**, designed to promote networking, storytelling, and peer-learning amongst CFCN participants. Folks from place-based forest collaboratives had a chance to share innovating success stories, collaboratives generated recommendations for the Colorado Forest Health Council, science communication experts shared wisdom and advice, and more. You can find recordings and resources, and register for future sessions on our [Branching Out webpage](#).

In November 2022, **Katie McGrath Novak (CFCN Coordinator) was appointed to the [Colorado Forest Health Council \(CFHC\)](#) as ‘an individual employed by or associated with a forest collaborative organization.’** In her first year, she served on both the Leveraging Resources and Legislative Committees, shared [recommendations](#) from forest collaboratives to the CFHC, created a [resource page](#) for people to keep up with the CFHC, and summarized key points from each quarterly CFHC meeting into short summaries for collaboratives.

**From September 6-8th, approximately 100 collaborative leaders and partners gathered in Salida, Colorado for the 2023 annual Colorado Forest Collaboratives Summit.** The creation of the CFCN was inspired by successes at past Forest Collaboratives Summits, and Summit now represents the

flagship annual event for the CFCN. You can read our Summit Summary with follow-up resources [here](#).

Here's what our Summit attendees had to say:

- “There's an inherent and powerful value in coming together. The formation and strength of relationships is indispensable.”
- “The level of optimism across the state is fantastic! Everyone seems to be dealing with the same major issues, which means success/lessons can be shared and adapted across the state.”

**I can't thank you enough for joining us on this journey – the [CFCN](#) exists thanks to the enthusiasm, ideas, time, expertise, and openness to support others that so many of you have brought to the table over and over again. And on a personal level, your kindness, responsiveness, excitement, and support have made my job both fun and fulfilling.**

- Katie McGrath Novak, CFCN Coordinator



# Collaboration on North Sand Creek

**Water can divide or connect us.** This is the story of an unusual stream that flows next the North Sand Hills in Jackson County, Colorado. In 2020, the CCC first heard about some tensions and challenges faced by land managers across boundaries in this area, and we decided this might make a good case study to learn more.

What started as a situation assessment to better understand a water issue on North Sand Creek has bloomed into a collaborative restoration project with private landowners, nonprofits, state agencies, and the Bureau of Land Management. **Together with the CCC facilitating these connections, we're working to protect local water rights, improve wildlife habitat, and restore a degraded stream.** Our goal is to restore dune vegetation, reduce sedimentation in the stream, and protect a local rancher's water right that had been impacted.

Over the past three years the CCC has brought together these diverse stakeholders, hosted virtual meetings and sandy field trips, forged connections and increased communication that led this group to commit to collaborative action. **We have now collaboratively raised funding, and we will begin on-the-ground work next summer.** We're proud of the commitment these partners have made to transform conflict into collaboration, and we're excited to see this project move forward in 2024.

- Nicole Reese, Conservation Engagement Specialist





## Solutions Lab

Beginning in January 2023, the CCC hosted 5 monthly Solution Lab meetings. This pilot program addressed challenges we all face during our collaborative work by **sharing ideas and growing our network of support - while also having fun!**

A total of 70 people participated in these interactive discussions, which took place using Zoom and featured lots of small group discussions. Some comments about these Labs included:

- “I really appreciate learning from the group and feeling like I’m leaving with lots of ideas to chew on.”
- “enjoyed the mix of discussion paired with ‘expert’ resources.”
- “My favorite part was the overall atmosphere. After each Lab I felt a little more empowered to exercise creativity in my work, rather than sticking to the same things that have always been done.”
- “the discussions in the breakout groups challenged (in the most positive of ways) to think about situations from different perspectives.”

**Collaboration is hard – we’ll be looking for new ways in the coming year to learn from each other and explore creative solutions!**

## Read or Listen to Learn More!



## Collaborative Behind the Scenes

The Western Collaborative Conservation Network's (WCCN) "[Collaboratives Behind-the-Scenes](#)" series features **Q&As with different conservation organizations to provide a view into what it takes to run a collaborative organization from challenges faced in building partnerships to tips for budding organizations.** In 2023, we had four editions of the series. Whether you're already running a collaborative and are looking to increase your efficiency or are thinking of starting a collaborative but want to know more about what you're getting into, **we hope you find this series insightful.**

First, [we featured Texan by Nature \(TxN\)](#), a nonprofit with the mission to "bring conservation and business together, amplify projects, and activate new investment in conservation which returns real benefits for people, prosperity, and natural resources." We spoke with Taylor Keys, Program Director of **Texan by Nature.**

Next, [we spoke with Shaleas Harrison](#), Wyoming Resource Coordinator at **Western Landowners Alliance (WLA)**, a membership-based organization working to advance policies and practices that sustain working lands, connected landscapes, and native species across the Western US.

Then, we enjoyed [conversing](#) with **Joe Zebrowski**, Special Programs Manager for the **New Mexico Forest & Watershed Restoration Institute (NMFWR)** and **Dee Tarr**, District Manager of the **Claunch-Pinto Soil and Water Conservation District** who work collaboratively on numerous projects throughout New Mexico.

Finally, we had the pleasure of [speaking with Chelsea Silva and Brian Murphy](#) from the **River Network**, a national organization that works to grow and strengthen a transformational national network of water, justice, and river advocates. To watch Chelsea and Brian speak at our September All-Partners, click [HERE](#).



## Emerging Leaders

As a part of the WCCN, the Emerging Leadership Initiative works to support individuals by connecting them with mentors, one another, and resources that create career and professional development opportunities and empower change. This extends to our "[Emerging Leaders](#)" blog series, where **we highlight individuals new to the conservation field with an innovative vision for the future of conservation work and the motivation, passion, and collaborative mindset to work toward that vision.**

[Jessica Archibald](#) is a doctorate student at Northern Arizona University studying collaborative conservation while working part-time as a facilitator with Southwest Decision Resources. For the Emerging Leaders Blog, we asked Jessica about what led her to pursue a PhD in collaborative conservation, what collaborative conservation means to her, and the challenges emerging leaders face in the field.

[Dr. Nigel Golden](#) is a Postdoctoral Researcher and Expedition Leader with the Polaris Project at Woodwell Climate Research Center. Nigel describes his experiences as a Black, Queer man in the STEM field, stresses the importance of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEIJ) in conservation and science, defines “Brave Leadership”, and describes his journey to becoming an arctic climate scientist.

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## **Ask Atti - The knowledge-sharing lovebird!**

**Have a question and want to seek advice from other collaborative conservationists?** The WCCN Awareness & Engagement Working Group has come up with a fun new way to engage and connect network partners through collaborative problem-solving via a Q&A platform: [Ask Atti!](#) This series is a play

off of the classic newspaper column, Ask Abby. Instead, we will be asking Aireona's charming Peach-faced Lovebird, Atticus!

**In this inaugural year of "Ask Atti", Atti and the WCCN answered three questions:**

- "[Dear Atti](#), I've just stepped into a new position supporting a collaborative conservation effort. Where do I even start? Who do I contact or find resources?" – Crystal
- "[Dear Atti](#), what do you do when you figure out multiple organizations are working on the same thing? How can we transform competition into collaboration?" – Rosie
- "[Dearest Atti](#), how have you successfully & meaningfully engaged your board and/or stakeholders in the process of creating or updating your organization's governance documents?" – Katie



**Gemara Gifford**

## **Special Projects**

### **Special Projects**

Gemara Gifford is our Special Projects Coordinator, and she has been working on some very special projects indeed!

#### **"Fish & Wildlife Conservation for Who?"**

Using a decolonial and multiracial feminist lens, Gemara addresses the current barriers and opportunities for fish and wildlife conservation to be more just and liberatory for Native leaders, elders, and concerned community members in Colorado. Read our full blog post and access Gemara's presentation [here!](#)

## "From Consultation to Meaningful Engagement with Indigenous Communities in Conservation" Workshop

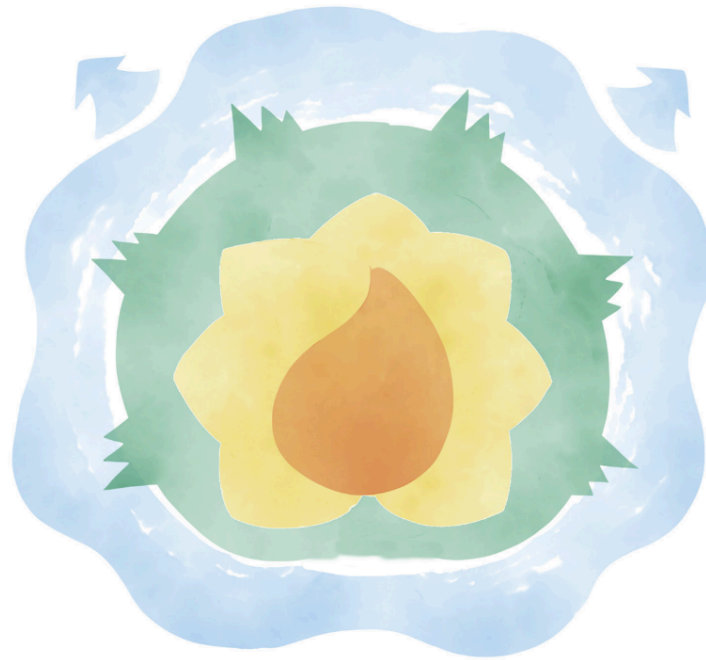
[This workshop](#) discusses strategies for implementing meaningful community engagement with Indigenous & marginalized communities in conservation, with the following desired outcomes:

- Define key terms and legal context to community engagement with Tribal Nations (USA) and Indigenous communities (Intl) in fish, wildlife, land & water conservation.
- Understand barriers to community engagement (personal, cultural, institutional, structural), as well as what levers you have to influence positive change.

On October 23rd, Gemara and Allison presented at the CSU Symposium for Inclusive Excellence on "From Consultation to Meaningful Engagement with Indigenous and Marginalized Communities in Conservation" and had over 100 registrants. You can watch a recording of the presentation [here](#).

**Learn more about Gemara's work and connect with her [HERE](#).**

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## Stages of Collaborative Readiness Framework

**"Preparing landscapes and communities to receive and recover from wildfire through collaborative readiness"** is a concept paper recently published via the collaboration of the Southwest Ecological Restoration Institutes ([SWERI](#)), the Colorado Forest Restoration Institute ([CFRI](#)), the Ecological Restoration Institute at Northern Arizona University ([ERI](#)), the New Mexico Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute ([NMFWRI](#)), and us here at the Center for Collaborative Conservation ([CCC](#)).

This concept paper presents a Stages of Collaborative Readiness framework. The framework **applies insights from the collaborative development literature to the context of forest and wildland fire risk management**. The purpose of the framework is to enhance the ability of collaboratives to progress within and between stages, and to enhance their ability to receive and deploy funding to increase the pace and scale of implementation by supporting the collective work of partners. The framework could be used to: inform self-assessment and adaptation by collaboratives; gauge or measure progress and

development over time; track performance and increase accountability; or guide allocation of financial and other resources to collaboratives relative to need.

Read more about the framework in our blog post [HERE](#).

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## Publications by Our Staff



**Aireona Bonnie-Raschke**



**Katie McGrath-Novak**

## Publications by Our Staff

### CCC Associate Director of Practice Aireona Bonnie-Raschke

Aireona published an [article](#) learning from sticky variables in collaborative social-ecological systems. We were interested in examining factors that are hard to pin down or describe - what we called “sticky variables.” We identified the following sticky variables: user rights and boundaries, adaptability of institutions, shared vision, trust and social capital, and outcomes.

Aireona also recently co-authored an [article](#) that notes that “there is not widespread scholarly agreement on the key ingredients” that might make up effective collaborative governance structures. We found that “there is no single set of agreed-upon core factors ... that transcend” the myriad ways and contexts in which collaborative conservation can happen. **The resultant list includes 22 factors that the authors propose contribute to effective governance structures**; this list is summarized [here](#).

Email [Aireona](#) for any questions or comments on her publications.

### Colorado Forest Collaboratives Network Coordinator Katie McGrath-Novak

Early this year, Katie McGrath Novak worked with Colorado State University's [Public Lands Policy Group](#) culminating in a [report](#) that looks at how wildfire incident management teams take into account the on-the-ground conditions created through USFS fuel treatments. Through interviews with fire and fuel personnel and case studies of seven wildfires where existing fuel treatments were considered in incident response, we learned about how people communicate about existing fuel treatments and the main treatment characteristics they look for. The findings illustrate general perspectives on improving fuel treatments to support wildfire incident management.

You can find the [final report here](#) as well as a [2-page research brief here](#), or reach [Katie](#) by email.

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## Job Board

**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 Mass Timber Coalition Director with the National Forest Foundation** | National Forest Foundation (NFF) is pleased to offer a regular, full-time, exempt, term (2 years) position that will lead a coalition of stakeholders to catalyze mass timber use broadly and sourcing of material from Colorado specifically as a solution to Colorado's climate forest health and fire risk challenges. The Director is the first full-time operating role for the Coalition. While the position will initially serve in a programmatic context given the start-up nature of the coalition, the Director's ability to build a strategic plan, take action to catalyze Coalition action, and attract additional capital may position the Coalition to incorporate as a separate institution. Learn more about the position and apply [HERE](#).

**Spicer Associate Professor of Collaborative Practice in Natural Resources at the Haub School of Environment & Natural Resources** | The Helga Otto Haub School of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) at the University of Wyoming (UW) invites applications for the Spicer Associate Professor of Collaborative Practice in Natural Resources. The Ruckelshaus Institute, embedded within the Haub School, advances the understanding and

resolution of complex environmental and natural resources challenges in the Mountain West by conducting and communicating relevant research and promoting collaborative decision making. Join the team as the Spicer Associate Professor [HERE](#).

**Collaborative Coordinator at the Dolores Watershed Resilient Forest**

**Collaborative (DWRF) |** The Dolores Watershed Resilient Forest Collaborative (DWRF) is seeking a collaborative coordinator to manage the day-to-day operations of the collaborative. This includes partner communication, coordinating/facilitating stakeholder and coordinating committee meetings, organizing field tours, coordinating collaborative development of and engagement with forest management projects, coordinating monitoring engagement, grant writing, and general operations. Apply [HERE](#).

**Program Manager for the Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition |** The

Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition (RVCC) is a network of over 80 community-based organizations and land management practitioners throughout the West. They are looking for a Program Manager to be responsible for the implementation of RVCC initiatives or program areas, including coordinating project development with the Coalition Director, RVCC staff, facilitating working groups, cultivating strategic relationships to expand the Coalition, and working with staff / contractors within program areas. Learn more and apply [HERE](#).

**Project Manager and Evaluator for the Carbon Ranch Initiative with the**

**Quivira Coalition |** Quivira Coalition's Carbon Ranch Initiative (CRI) is dedicated to research, engagement, and technical support that helps producers build soil health on working lands. We focus on engaging with land stewards around the Healthy Soil Principles, circular economies (making waste productive), and using monitoring and evaluation to inform planning as ways to both combat and build resilience to climate change. Apply to be an evaluator for a four-year grant funded technical position at the program manager level [HERE](#).

**Restoration Landscape Coordinator with Colorado Open Lands |** This is a

collaborative position serving the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Intermountain West Joint Venture (IWJV). The position responsibility will be to further the delivery and implementation of conservation efforts of North Park Restoration Landscape through the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). Apply for this 3-year position at the BLM Kremmling Field Office [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](#).*

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

Be well.



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