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WARNER COLLEGE
OF NATURAL RESOURCES
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

May 2023



A Note from the CCC Director

We are hearing “intelligence” a lot these days, most often as “artificial.” I have become curious how AI has renewed the dialogue about what intelligence is, and, in turn, what that means for our relationships with each other and the rest of the world. The meaning of “intelligence” has been debated for centuries. Starting with Descartes, “intelligence” has been, basically, “what humans do.” With AI mimicking people so well, we are now searching for how intelligent humans differ from intelligent machines.

The proposed bounds of intelligence have exploded in recent decades. Jane Goodall’s observation that chimps are intelligent—controversial at the time—is now plainly obvious. It gets more interesting when intelligence looks a lot

different from human intelligence. Octopuses can recognize—and outwit—individual humans. Something akin to intelligence arises from interactions among bees in a hive. Increasingly, some biologists argue that plants have intelligence that emerges from their network of roots, stems, and leaves. Others go further, applying “intelligence” to forests.

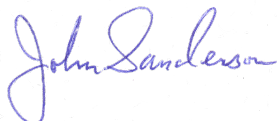
What does this have to do with collaborative conservation? First, trying to define intelligence compels me to recognize how hard it can be to understand the intelligence of other individual people, let alone other species and ecosystems. I take this as a reminder to get curious, question my assumptions, and seek additional ways to look and listen. Second, there is intelligence in networks, communities, and cultures. Tapping into that intelligence is vital to our future.

If this topic interests you, too, I suggest checking out some of these:

- In the book [Ways of Being](#), James Bridle says we think of intelligence way too narrowly. If you don't have time for a book, listen to the ~1 hr podcast [The Intelligence Singing All Around Us](#).
- In the article [The Intelligent Plant](#), Michael Pollan describes the debate over plant intelligence; in [this recent short profile](#) we hear from one of the leading advocates of plant intelligence.
- In the book [Finding the Mother Tree](#), Suzanne Simard shares her discoveries about the “wood wide web,” and her journey as a woman in science. Also hear Dr. Simard in [this 18-min Ted talk](#).
- The article [Coming Full Circle: Indigenous Knowledge, Environment, and Our Future](#) by Deborah McGregor, written in 2004, is still 100% relevant.
- After hearing several recommendations, I picked up the book [God, Human, Animal, Machine](#) by Meghan O’Gieblyn. I second those recommendations.
- Although he never says “conservation,” Ezra Klein has several engrossing podcasts about AI, including [this one with tech journalist Kelsey Piper](#).

Enjoy!

Be well,



John

News from the CCC

Center for Collaborative Conservation is hiring! **STUDENT COMMUNICATIONS INTERN**

POSITION INFORMATION

- Assist in the coordination of Center for Collaborative Conservation (CCC) and Western Collaborative Conservation Network (WCCN) communication strategies
- 10-15 hr/wk, one-year position
- \$18+ per hour commensurate with experience; graduate & advanced undergraduate students are encouraged to apply

Apply via CSU Handshake Job #7806053 | Applications due May 23

Direct questions to conserve@colostate.edu with subject line "Communications Intern"



CSU Students - We're Hiring!

We are looking for our next CSU student communications intern!

Students, are you searching for an opportunity to hone your communication skills while supporting some really great conservation initiatives?

In this position, you would build your network by engaging with a network of conservation practitioners, support the projects of a diverse and passionate team at the CCC, and gain a deeper understanding of collaborative conservation theory and on-the-ground projects while expanding your communication skills and portfolio.

Read the full job description and [application instructions here](#). We are asking for a resume and 1-minute video sharing (1) your communication experience and (2) expressing how the values of the Center for Collaborative Conservation resonate with you. **Applications are due by Tues 5/23.**

Submit your resume on Handshake [here](#) #7806053.

Questions? Email Conserve@Colostate.edu

CSU Community – Please help us share this job opportunity with your network!



TODAY - Update and Upcoming Workshop on Colorado Forest Health Council

Colorado Forest Collaboratives Network Coordinator Katie McGrath Novak represents Colorado's forest collaboratives on the [Colorado Forest Health Council](#). In our **May 18th Branching Out peer-learning session**, Katie will give a brief overview of the Council's May 11th quarterly meeting, then we'll split into breakout groups where members of Colorado's forest collaboratives can discuss Council happenings and make recommendations. If you are involved with forest collaboratives in Colorado, learn more and register for Branching out [here](#).

Highlight from the May 11th meeting: The Colorado Forest Health Council has recommended and supported [House Bill 1060](#) (Updates to State Forest Service Tree Nursery) and [Senate Bill 005](#) (Forestry and Wildfire Mitigation Workforce) for the past year, and both were signed into law by Colorado Governor Jared Polis in the past week.



Upcoming Workshop - Storyteller's Circle

Who are we talking to when we tell our stories? **Join us for a discussion on audience!** How can we be more strategic about crafting stories for specific audiences? How can we reach new and different audiences? Come prepared to share your experiences in thinking about your audience and incorporating it into communications.

[Register here](#) for this month's session on **May 25th from 12:30 to 2 p.m.**

MT

You MUST register for each session separately!

How does the Storyteller's Circle work?

Sessions will be broken into 45-minute halves. The first half will feature a speaker, presentation, or facilitated discussion that allows participants to work collaboratively through storytelling challenges. The second half will be a "write-in" where you'll have space to work on your storytelling projects in a quiet group space. During this time, we ask that you mute yourself and use the chat feature to ask questions, bring a problem to the group's attention, or hold side conversations.

You can read about the last session in [our blog here](#) with links to detailed notes and the recording.

Reach out to Emily Downing (emily.downing@iwjv.org) or Nicole Reese (nicole.reese@colostate.edu) for more information. **We're looking forward to connecting with you at a future Storyteller's Circle!**



Save the Date - Tucson, AZ in April 2024!

Western Collaborative Conservation Network's [Confluence 2024](#)

To be held for 3 days during the week of April 1-5th, 2024 in Tucson, Arizona

Confluence is the Western Collaborative Conservation Network's premier community-building and learning event, open to practitioners, researchers, community members, and students working in the collaborative conservation field.

- Meet new collaborative conservation professionals and reconnect with old friends.
- Join peer-to-peer learning sessions and other capacity building opportunities.

Please let us know if you are interested in coming!

To be added to the interested list and to receive Confluence details in the coming months [Click HERE](#)

**Publications from our Staff - Aireona**

There are a variety of different frameworks that can be applied to collaborative conservation efforts in order to examine factors of potential success. For practitioners, these frameworks can be helpful in designing collaborative projects, or highlighting elements of ongoing work that could use more attention in order to heighten the potential for success. Many of these factors are easy to assess and monitor (if necessary), but we were interested in examining factors that are hard to pin down or describe- what we called “sticky variables.” We identified the following variables as being sticky:

- user rights and boundaries
- adaptability of institutions

- shared vision
- trust and social capital
- and outcomes

In particular, sticky variables represent highly dynamic elements of collaborative work, they may change spatially or over time, and/or they may be influenced by various human dimensions including the behavior of individuals and shifting social pressures. For folks working in the collaborative conservation field, taking a closer look at these elements of projects and longer-term collaboratives could be particularly helpful for strategy development and monitoring purposes. [Learn more here](#) about sticky variables and let us know how these things show up in your work! Email [Aireona](#) for any questions or comments.



New Blog Post - Collaboratives Behind the Scenes!

We had the pleasure to speak 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

including the Estancia Basin Watershed Health Restoration and Monitoring Project, the Greater Rio Grande Watershed Alliance, the Mountainair Collaborative, and the North Central New Mexico Watershed Restoration Program.

You can read the [blog post here](#) to learn from their many years of experience collaborating together!

Get to Know the CCC



Meet our CCC Fellow: Alex Ocañas

After starting a career in international conservation, Alex Ocañas has settled in Hamilton, Montana. She believes people are the greatest tool in conservation, and is passionate about engaging local folks as agents of conservation. She relies on training in the conservation social sciences to create programs that can help people understand local resource challenges and opportunities for success, so we can effectively advance toward solutions together. She has roots in Texas, Alaska, Washington, and Montana, too, and currently works as the Community Engagement Coordinator for the Bitter Root Water Forum.

You can read more about Cohort 13's projects [here](#).

Scholarly and Applied Impact

Current and past CCC Fellows and staff publish impactful research on collaboration and conservation. Here is the latest. CCC Fellows and staff are indicated by bold font.

*[Michelle Greiner, **K. McGrath Novak**, and C. Shultz. 2023. Assessing how fuel treatments are considered during incident response. Public Lands Policy Group at Colorado State University. Public Lands Policy Group Practitioner Paper #17, Warner College of Natural Resources.](#)*

*[**JR McReevy, Adrien, E.** 2023. Second impact syndrome: The influence of climate change and increased disaster frequency on livelihoods and adaptive capacity in rural Haiti. International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction, Volume 85, pp.](#)*

On-the-ground conditions make a difference when responding to natural disasters. This is the theme of an article recently published by **John McGreevy**, along with his Haitian research assistance **E. Adrien**. This article is one of the outcomes of their Fellows Project in Haiti as part of Cohort 4. The two co-authors note that when extreme weather events occur one after another,

their effects tend to compound, thus making it more difficult for communities and ecosystems to respond, replenish, and adapt. In fact, “symptoms and processes seen in compound disasters parallel current understanding of repeat brain trauma.” The authors were therefore able to use a medical framework (Second Impact Syndrome) to apply a systems-based approach for understanding disaster risk reduction. Their framework can “form a common platform upon which local communities and outside entities can better understand, discuss, and respond to compound disasters.”

In the same theme, **Katie McGrath**, who oversees the [Colorado Forest Collaboratives Network](#) with the CCC, recently co-authored a Practitioner Paper that looks at how wildfire incident management teams take into account the on-the-ground conditions created through USFS fuel treatments. Coordinated communication about fuel treatments is critical, including knowing how long ago the treatment happened and whether there has been on-going maintenance. This communication ensures existing fuel treatments provide a tactical advantage during wildfire incidents.

As the number, scope, and scale of natural disasters increase, it is helpful to develop and learn strategies that can make our communities more resilient. These seem to include many of the tenants central to collaborative conservation – communication, trust, relationships, and an understanding of how these all work together as a system.

Other News and Opportunities

2023 Yampa Basin Rendezvous: Snows, Flows, and Drought: Managing for Western Water Resilience

June 1-2, 2023; Colorado Mountain College, Steamboat Springs, CO

This [two-day event](#) will provide an overview of the record weather and water extremes that continue to define our present and future in the Yampa River Basin, and whether current water and riparian land management practices will lead to the resilient future we desire. The overarching goal is to provide a venue that encourages a science-based, community-centered approach to create informed, adaptive, proactive, and science-based management strategies for the Yampa Basin’s natural resources and communities.

The **Center for Collaborative Conservation** will be leading a panel on the importance of capacity to our ability to adapt and respond to changing conditions along with the **City of Craig** and the **Rio Grande Headwaters Restoration Project**.

Colorado Watershed Assembly - the Sustaining Colorado Watersheds Conference Oct. 3-5, 2023 brings together knowledgeable and engaged community members, scientists, ecologists, water managers, educators, community leaders, young professionals, policymakers and regulators to share knowledge, network, and discuss current issues facing Colorado's watersheds. This year's Beyond the Banks theme emphasizes the need to expand our thinking, incorporate new perspectives, explore paradigm shifts, and collaborate across disciplines and sectors to continue solving complex problems.

Conference organizers are [accepting abstracts for presentations](#) through **May 22, 2023** at 5 p.m. MDT.

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:

Forestry Program Coordinator for Mancos Conservation District in Mancos, Colorado closes June 9th - [apply here](#).

Collaboration Technician for New Mexico Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute can [apply here](#).

Western Water Policy Associate for Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership based in Southwest US, open until filled - [apply 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 [supporting the CCC with a donation](#).

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

Be well.



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