



Center for Collaborative Conservation Colorado State University Strategic Plan

1 July 2016 to 30 June 2019

Innovation through Collaboration

Introduction

What we aspire to do

The Center for Collaborative Conservation was created to transform conservation into a uniting force through collaboration by empowering all voices to be heard. The CCC was also created to make university research and education fully relevant to conservation practice. Despite 20 years of building support for collaborative conservation, we still see a great need to promote a collaborative approach, perhaps now more than ever:

- Local communities around the world, who are faced with unprecedented economic, political, and climatic change, are strongest if they have leaders who focus on building trust, creating innovative solutions, working together across broad landscapes, and leading strong collaborative efforts that support both healthy human and natural communities. *We aspire to inspire, train and learn from those leaders.*
- Because these changes are now so rapid, we need collaborative conservation leaders who learn and adapt quickly, and achieve impact on conservation more effectively. *We aspire to bring the power of university research to support those leaders so they can be more nimble and effective now.*
- Around the globe, we also see many strong but fragmented efforts in collaborative conservation, with individual leaders unable to fully tap the strength of others who are like-minded. *We aspire to link together these conservation leaders, co-learn with them, build tools they need, and shine a light on their work.*
- We see the need for the 21st century land-grant university to be much more community-active, so that all of our students have the practical education and tools to ‘hit the ground running’ as change-makers and that our research has wide and practical application as soon as possible. *We aspire to help lead the charge, as fast and effectively as possible, that will make our universities more supportive of communities, policy makers and others who tackle the world’s hardest problems.*

Our Evolving Definition of Collaborative Conservation

We define collaborative conservation as follows:

Collaborative conservation is an inclusive process that openly invites diverse groups of stakeholders to conserve nature and build healthy natural and human communities by jointly solving problems through sustained collective learning and action.

History of the Center for Collaborative Conservation

In 2005, Ed Warner and Joyce Berry worked with a group of faculty in the Warner College of Natural Resources at Colorado State University to develop a vision for a new Center or Institute for Cooperative Conservation (its original name). In 2008, the WCNR hired the CCC's founding director (Robin Reid) and we created the CCC's first plan through its Design and Development team and a major planning meeting. This Design and Development team then became the CCC's 10-12-member governance body, the Executive Committee in 2009. Our first cohort of CCC Fellows began in 2009, led by Stacy Lynn. In 2010, we started brainstorming about the Colorado Conservation Exchange, an environmental market for northern Colorado. We also started building and teaching graduate and undergraduate courses at CSU in collaborative conservation. In 2011, just as Kim Skyclander became the CCC's Associate Director, we held the CCC's second planning meeting and developed the CCC's second strategic plan for the period of 2012-2014. We also starting building the Collaborative Conservation Learning Network, led by Jill Lackett. In 2013, Ed Warner gave a permanent funding platform for the CCC with a \$9.25 million endowment. In 2014, we started building the Collaborative Conservation Atlas for Colorado led by Ch'aska Huayhuaca and launched the CCC's Undergraduate Initiative, led by Arren Mendezona. In 2015, we raised significant funding for the Colorado Conservation Exchange and were able to hire its founding Director, Heather Schinkel. In 2016, Maria Fernandez-Gimenez became the CCC's first Associate Director for Research to raise the impact and profile of CCC's research portfolio. Also, in this same year, Heather Knight became the CCC's first Associate Director of the new Practitioner Program, aimed to ensure that all we do meets practitioner needs through linked education, research and practice. By 2016, we had supported 8 cohorts of 110 Fellows working all over the world. This is the CCC's third strategic plan.

Who We Work With

The CCC works with and supports the work of:

- Current collaborative conservation initiatives and the conservation practitioners and organizations who comprise their membership,
- Future collaborative conservation practitioners who are enhancing their ability to achieve conservation through collaborative efforts, focusing on CSU undergraduate and graduate students,
- Thought leaders in collaborative conservation,

- Other organizations that support and network among collaborative conservation practitioners or their organizations (or ‘bridging organizations’¹)
- Researchers at CSU and other universities, and in government and civil society, particularly ‘pracademics’² who boundary span³ between academics and conservation practice.

Where we work

The CCC works with diverse peoples in their local landscapes around the globe through its students, faculty, fellows, and staff. The CCC’s deepest work is in Colorado, Mongolia and Kenya.

CCC Vision and Mission

Vision

A more collaborative and resilient world where diverse peoples work together to conserve nature and build healthy natural and human communities.

Mission

The Center for Collaborative Conservation helps create innovative and lasting conservation solutions for people and nature through collaboration.

How we meet our mission

The CCC meets its Mission through collaborative conservation education, research and practice.

¹ *Bridging organizations* strategically link multiple actors to one another that may or may not be on either side of a boundary, and who may or may not come from different levels on pertinent scales, like management or jurisdiction (Crona & Parker, 2012; Folke et al., 2005). They do this by creating an arena for information and innovation exchange, collaborative learning, trust building, and possibly conflict resolution (Westly & Vredenburg, 1991; Crona & Parker, 2012).

² A *pracademic* is a practitioner or academic, who spans the boundary between academics and practice, by working in both areas.

³ *Boundary spanning* is a process where individuals or organizations work to better integrate both functions and actions across institutional, administrative, political, landscape or other borders.

Education Program Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Educate and train transformative leaders. Learn with and train forward thinking conservation leaders who help diverse communities and organizations implement innovative conservation and livelihood solutions through collaboration.

Objective 1: Classwork and collaborative experiences. Learn with and educate students and practitioners in the theory and practice of collaborative conservation through classwork and hands-on experience.

Objective 2: Skills and tools through other trainings. Provide practitioners and students opportunities to learn and practice collaborative conservation skills and tools through workshops and newly developed trainings.

Objective 3: Mentor and serve as the primary advisor for CLTL master's students each year.

Goal 2: Revise and implement the Fellows Program. Through the Fellows Program, provide transformative experiences for graduate students, faculty and practitioners so that they become 'new conservationists', able to make science useful in conservation practice, integrate different knowledges, and ensure conservation supports local livelihoods through training and networking opportunities that align and leverage the CCC practitioner and research programs.

Objective 1: Create a more impactful Fellows Program by experimenting by lengthening the Fellows Program to two years and support more team fellowships to achieve greater and longer-term impact, starting in 2017 or 2018. Longer, team fellowships will allow for: 1) better cross learning among practitioners, faculty, graduate students and undergraduate students, 2) more integrated inter-disciplinary and cross-sectoral fellows work, and 3) achievement of more significant fellowship impacts on conservation and livelihoods. NOTE: Individual fellowships may be added back in depending on program evaluation results.

Objective 2: Host a Fellows networking and skill building retreat and celebration by hosting new fellows along with selected past fellows to promote networking, conduct training, and introduce the new cohort to the CCC and partners.

Objective 3: Evaluate the Fellows Program thoroughly and write periodic reports and papers for publication on what we learn by implementing this innovative program.

Objective 4: Fundraise for the Fellows Program

Practitioner Program Goals and Objectives

Goal 3: Become the “go to” resource for collaborative conservation practitioners through facilitating the sharing, learning and development of effective collaboration skills and tools.

Objective 1: Complete a collaborative conservation practitioner needs assessment by March 2017.

Objective 2: Revise the collaborative conservation practitioner program work plan, based on the Needs Assessment, by May 2017.

Objective 3: Starting in summer or fall 2017, work with leading conservation practitioners to develop, transfer and or test new collaborative conservation tools and skills.

Objective 4: Starting in fall 2017, fully evaluate the opportunity / utility of implementing a pilot for a mentoring/coaching/internship program between current practitioners and future leaders in collaborative conservation.

Goal 4: Support conservation practitioners to implement on-the-ground conservation projects that increase the use of collaboration skills and tools.

Objective 1: Bi-Annually support and expand the CCC Fellows Program by encouraging 1-2 practitioners from diverse and underrepresented areas (such as corporate, or state and federal agency personnel) to apply for individual or team fellowships.

Objective 2: Participate, strategically, as advisors or board members for key collaborative initiatives as they arise, to build new partnerships and influence collaborative work of other organizations.

Objective 3: By June 2018, work with partners and stakeholders to complete a test and proof of concept and implement 2 demonstration projects for the Colorado Conservation Exchange, a new watershed investment fund in northern Colorado.

Discover (Research) Program Goals and Objectives

Goal 5: Be a leader in collaborative conservation research by creating a nationally and internationally recognized collaborative conservation research program that integrates diverse knowledge, develops new models of transformative and collaborative science, and co-produces actionable science with diverse stakeholders to improve conservation practice and outcomes.

Objective 1: Synthesize existing knowledge/research on collaborative conservation (CC)

Objective 2: Create new knowledge about collaborative conservation, transformative science and integration of diverse knowledge streams.

Objective 3: Promote CCC research outputs

Goal 6: Build and sustain CCC research capacity (e.g. funding, intellectual capital)

Objective 1: Raise funding for CCC research leadership, research activities

Objective 2: Create a larger governance structure for the research program of the CCC

Leadership, Development, and Communication Goals and Objectives

Goal 7: Achieve higher impact and leveraging partnerships. Strategically redesign and improve CCC human and financial resources, communications, and program activities to achieve higher impacts on critical issues in collaborative conservation.

Objective 1: Raise additional funding and leverage current CCC resources to support stronger human resources and expand program activities.

Objective 2: Raise the visibility of the CCC and collaborative conservation, both internally and externally through better communications and marketing

Objective 3: Develop and implement a strategy and plan for engaging strategic partners and clients of the CCC

Goal 8: Strengthen CCC internal capacity in communications, marketing and fund-raising

Objective 1: Improve CCC human resource capacity to achieve higher impact.

Objective 2: Re-design CCC governance and fund-raising for stronger and higher level impact

Objective 3: Regularly evaluate and improve our organization and programs

Appendix A: Glossary of Terms

Bridging organizations

These organizations strategically link multiple actors to one another that may or may not be on either side of a boundary, and who may or may not come from different levels on pertinent scales, like management or jurisdiction (Crona & Parker, 2012; Folke et al., 2005). They do this by creating an arena for information and innovation exchange, collaborative learning, trust building, and possibly conflict resolution (Westly & Vredenburg, 1991; Crona & Parker, 2012).

Boundary spanning

A process where individuals or organizations work to better integrate both functions and actions across institutional, administrative, political, landscape or other borders.

Collaborative Conservation Initiatives

Dynamic and diverse networks of people connected by interdependence and shared commitment to undertaking a sustained process of interaction in order to collectively address environmental or social-ecological situations that cross boundaries (jurisdictional, geographic, cultural, or other) and are linked to a geographic place. Criteria for identifying collaborative initiatives include:

- Composition of at least 3 or more stakeholders representing the diverse perspectives of organizations, interest groups, and/or individuals with a stake in the outcome that participate on a regular basis or have recognizable responsibilities within the initiative
- Sharing of resources and assets
- Formed to achieve one or more conservation goals
- Participants engage in a sustained process of interaction or consensus building at some point(s) during the group's history lasting more than one year

Collaborative Conservation Skills and Tools

Skills are intangible abilities one can learn through exposure and practice; such as leadership, mediation, facilitation, reflective listening or active listening, effective communication, collaborating. Tools are mechanisms that could be tangible (like a participatory mapping tool or virtual meeting software to broaden participation) or intangible (like the livelihoods framework) that might allow you to extend your skill set to solve particular problems.

Evidence map

A systematic search of a broad field to identify gaps in knowledge and/or future research needs that presents results in a user-friendly format, often a visual figure or graph, or a searchable database', p. xx, Miake-Ley et al 2016, doi: 10.1186/s13643-016-0204-x.

Pracademic

A practitioner or academic, who spans the boundary between academics and practice, by working in both areas.

Practitioner

People who implement collaborative conservation on the ground, including landowners, land managers, civil society, government officials, businesses and the general public. This goes from micro like land manager to macro like general public.