

Innovative conservation projects receive funding and support through the Collaborative Conservation Fellows Program

The Center for Collaborative Conservation (CCC) is excited to announce recipients of our fifteenth Cohort of the CCC Fellows Program.

Collaborative conservation brings people together to solve complex environmental issues in ways that benefit people and nature, the solutions going beyond what any individual or agency could achieve on their own. The CCC Fellows Program equips our Fellows with the skills, knowledge, and networks needed to drive collaborative conservation efforts and maximize on-the-ground impacts. The Fellows program benefits students, faculty, and practitioners around the globe by providing funding, training, and a community of practice.

Our Fellows work closely with communities to solve conservation problems. For example, a herder in Mongolia may have deep knowledge of how wolves use the landscape through years of observation. He also has ideas about what makes his herds vulnerable to wolves and other predators. Rather than relying on what scientific papers say about conflict between wolves and ranchers, the CCC Fellow works with this herder, listening carefully to not only what he knows, but also what his concerns are. She shares wildlife surveys collected by drones as well as additional resources about wolf distributions. In this way, both parties share their ideas and resources, co-creating new knowledge and solutions that work best for herders, the wolves, and other communities.

This is the power and the promise of collaborative conservation, and why the Fellows Program remains a flagship of the CCC. Each year, the CCC funds Fellows to work on projects both in the US and internationally. Bringing together Fellows from different countries and contexts creates an ideal learning environment that can tap into and leverage the unique experiences, perspectives, and knowledge systems each Fellow brings to bear.

Cohort 15 consists of 16 Fellows pursuing 5 conservation projects working with communities in 4 countries:

- Here in Colorado, two women will leverage the connection between people and place to address soil and water issues impacting Conejos County producers, many of whom have been farming and ranching in the San Luis Valley for generations.
- In Ghana, where a species of colobus monkey is highly endangered, a local conservationist will work with community members to develop a species conservation action plan to protect the colobus monkey in ways that also protect local livelihoods.
- In Brazil, a PhD student (originally from Brazil and now studying in the US) will work with her team to support the environmental governance of the Waimiri Atroari people. She believes that advancing culturally relevant conservation in this way is an important part of protecting the Amazon.
- In Kenya, an established conservationist will work with a local team to document traditional knowledge of plants used for food, medicine, and other purposes. This will benefit indigenous communities and strengthen her local organization's ability to respond to the local needs of people and nature.

- In Honduras, a PhD student will work with CSU faculty and local community members to collaboratively develop environmental management plans for the Lake Yojoa Protected Area. They believe that local participation in decisions is essential to the future of the lake.

The CCC awarded \$73,100 to this cohort to support their projects and participation. Cohort 15 will kick off in the coming months with a 3-day training retreat at CSU's beautiful Mountain Campus that will delve into topics such as stakeholder engagement and management, facilitation and decision-making frameworks, and project planning and evaluation. As one Fellow remarked, the *"opportunity to connect with other Fellows – be inspired by their work, learn from them, and build a bond"* is an important part of the CCC Fellows program. Over the course of the 18-month Fellowship, they will continue to learn and apply the practices that are the hallmark of successful collaborative conservation, culminating in their End-of-Project Fellows Presentations in August 2026. You can learn more about the CCC Fellows Program by going to our [website](#). If you would like to stay in the know about the CCC and our Fellows, [subscribe](#) to our monthly newsletter.

