



WARNER COLLEGE
OF NATURAL RESOURCES
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY



THE COLLABORATIVE CONSERVATION FELLOWS PROGRAM

Request for Proposals, 2027-2028

Submission Deadline: October 23, 2026

The Center for Collaborative Conservation (CCC) at Colorado State University (CSU) is seeking applicants for our Fellows Program, Cohort 17.

The CCC was established in CSU's Warner College of Natural Resources in 2008 to inform, promote, and support collaboration on meaningful conservation issues across Colorado, the Western United States, and the world. Our Fellows practice collaborative conservation, an innovative and impactful natural resource management effort that works to include diverse perspectives and interests; share power, resources, and funding; and create systems for implementation, adaptation, and accountability to shared goals and outcomes. Fellows projects provide productive platforms for people to have a voice in stewarding their local places, and implement processes for finding common ground among many different values. Collaborative conservation goes beyond defining conservation success in ecological terms. It accounts for locally defined priorities and local perspectives, seeking to include different voices and knowledge systems in decision-making processes. It creates new, innovative opportunities to solve problems collaboratively.

The CCC Fellows Program provides funding, training, and a community of practice for a cohort of students, practitioners, and/or faculty to plan and implement on-the-ground projects that share these values. During the program, Fellows learn and apply the practices that are the hallmark of successful collaborative conservation. In addition to enjoying structured learning opportunities and receiving monetary support for conservation work, past Fellows report that the program is a meaningful and impactful experience. As one of our Fellows put it: *"Being a long-term member of the CCC family has dramatically shaped me as a conservationist and as an individual... Through all of these experiences I have learned that decisions based on good science and meaningful relationships... are central not only to successful conservation outcomes, but are also some of the most personally rewarding parts of the process."*

Three virtual information sessions will be held on [9/11/2026 \(12:00-1:00 pm MT\)](#); [9/23/2026 \(5:00-6:00 pm MT\)](#); and [10/8/2026 \(9:00-10:00 am MT\)](#). Allison Brody, CCC's Associate Director of Learning, will be

available throughout the RFP period (August 19-October 23) to support the proposal preparation process by answering questions about project ideas, proposal format and content, and addressing other questions and concerns. Schedule a meeting [here](#) or contact allison.brody@colostate.edu.

ABOUT THE FELLOWS PROGRAM

The Collaborative Conservation Fellows Program is for those interested in conservation at any stage of their careers, including graduate students, mid-career professionals, academics, or practitioners. As highlighted in our [10-year Review](#), the Fellows Program is proud to feature projects that work collaboratively with local communities to help build livelihoods and steward their landscapes.

The Fellows Program is designed to build the capacity of Fellows as leaders in collaborative conservation. We do this by (1) providing monetary awards to support experiential learning through implementation of on-the-ground projects; (2) creating a learning community with current and past Fellows, and by (3) providing training and mentoring. Training topics include exploring the foundations of collaborative conservation, strategies and considerations for engaging stakeholders, facilitating decision-making processes, integrating different knowledge systems, and participatory methods.

Fellows projects will take place from March 2027-August 2028, and can involve a team of Fellows or an individual Fellow. Since 2008 we have accepted proposals for a variety of projects, including:

- Working with a diverse group of stakeholders to do on-the-ground conservation, such as a restoration, social science, or citizen science project.
- Building the capacity of a group of stakeholders to collaboratively address a conservation issue. This type of project might include convening, training, planning, creating tools (such as an app, social network map, photovoice, etc.), doing outreach, or other activities.
- Co-produce research that contributes to new conservation management plans or sheds light on transferable and transformative collaborative conservation practices.

Our [Publications](#) page, [Fellows webpage](#), and the [10-year Review](#) of the Fellows program lists some of the results and a more complete view of what Fellows have done.

We understand that in many contexts, collaborative conservation efforts require established relationships with one or more stake/rightsholder groups, especially as it relates to the opportunity to co-create project goals. For this reason, we welcome Fellow project proposals that highlight activities to develop and manage a relationship that doesn't yet exist. This would include the trust-building actions that need to happen before a conservation project idea can be co-created with the stake/rightsholder in question, such as an Indigenous community or other marginalized group.

Fellows also participate in our mentoring program, in which Fellow alumni or other practitioners support Fellows in their personal and professional growth.

WHO SHOULD APPLY

Individuals or teams may apply. We accept project proposals from:

- **Practitioners:** In general, includes people who use, own, or manage natural resources as individuals (e.g., landowners, ranchers, foresters, farmers) or who work professionally as part of Native Nations, the private sector, non-profits, government and state agencies, and other entities.
- **Academics:** Faculty, research scientists, post docs, and extension agents. We strongly encourage projects from faculty and students at Colorado State University while also encouraging proposals from outside CSU.
- We encourage projects that advance partnerships where practitioners and academics are working together. For projects not based at CSU, connections to CSU are encouraged but not required.

HOW TO BECOME A FELLOW

Those interested in becoming a Fellow should submit a proposal by October 23, 2026. Supporting resources, including a budget template, RFP FAQ's, proposal guidelines, and review criteria can be found on the [Fellows webpage](#). In addition, applicants will have multiple opportunities for support in proposal preparation. Interested applicants can learn more through virtual Information Sessions scheduled on [9/11/2026 \(12:00-1:00 pm MT\)](#); [9/23/2026 \(5:00-6:00 pm MT\)](#); and [10/8/2026 \(9:00-10:00 am MT\)](#). Applicants can also schedule a 45-minute meeting to ask questions, discuss project ideas, review proposal format and content, and address other concerns. These proposal support meetings can be scheduled [here](#). You may also reach out to CCC's Associate Director of Learning, Allison Brody, at allison.brody@colostate.edu.

PROPOSAL TIMELINE

Support during the proposal process - Information sessions and individually scheduled meetings	August 19-October 23
Project proposal submission deadline	October 23
Committee review process	October 23-December 9
Finalists selected	Week of December 14, 2026

Submit a Project Proposal

Successful project proposals will describe:

- How you, your teammates (if applicable), and your project will benefit from participating in this program. How poised are you in your personal and professional growth to be able to take advantage of this learning opportunity?

- The ways in which your project exemplifies collaborative conservation work, and the plan to accomplish this.
- How stake/rightsholders and/or other community members are either currently or anticipated to participate in the project (for example, see [Collaborative Conservation: CCC “How To”](#)).
- The types of conservation or community issues that your project will address, and how.
- The capacity of the project team to not only implement the project, but also provide an impactful experience for the Fellow(s) involved.
- How each member of the project team will contribute to the project and fulfill the expectations of the Fellows Program.
- If your project is led by and/or focused on an underserved or marginalized communities, their level of involvement is described as well as the specific impacts you hope your project will have.
- If and how your project connects to CSU faculty, staff, and/or students.
- A draft budget (see [Budget Template](#)).

The review committee will use criteria listed in the [Project Proposal Review Criteria](#) to assess and rate project proposals. Because we have a preference for projects that have some connection with CSU, if you don’t have a connection, we encourage you to reach out to establish one – for example, by contacting faculty, extension agents, or CSU Centers.

Project proposals should be submitted to allison.brody@colostate.edu, and will be accepted through October 10, 2025. Successful finalists will be informed by December 15, 2025, and the Fellowship will begin with an orientation in February 2026.

Resources:

[Project Proposal Guidelines](#)

[Project Proposal Review Criteria](#)

[Budget Template](#)

[Foundations for Practicing Collaboration Conservation: a Theoretical Framework & the CC Fellows Learning Modules](#)

[Collaborative Conservation: CCC “How To”](#)

[The CCC How To Resource page](#)

[FAQ’s](#)

FELLOWS FUNDING

In general, Fellowship awards range from \$5,000-\$9,000 for an individual applicant, with a cap of \$18,000 for a Team project each year. This funding can be used for a variety of purposes, including stipends, salaries, equipment, services, and travel. Depending on the number and type of proposals accepted into the program, we may offer partial funding for projects.

WHAT TO EXPECT AS A FELLOW

The CC Fellows Program, Cohort 17, will take place from March 2027 through August 2028.

Cohort 17 Fellows must attend an in-person Training Retreat (April 2027), as well as virtual cohort trainings held throughout the course of the Fellowship. Learning modules are constructed from [*Foundations for Practicing Collaborative Conservation: a Theoretical Framework & the CCC Fellows Learning Modules*](#). We recognize that the practice of collaborative conservation is situationally responsive, and there is no one way to do it. Rather, these Modules are meant to help each individual develop their philosophy and approach based on key sets of principles, processes, and techniques. We seek to embed research into practice and equip CC Fellows with the knowledge and skills to successfully practice collaborative conservation.

Following this retreat, each Fellow (Project Team or Individual) will build on their proposal by developing a project plan (details provided spring 2027). This will be an iterative process with CCC staff, ensuring the project maximizes opportunities for collaboration, community engagement, and Fellows' learning. Fellows (Project Teams and Individuals) will also be expected to submit triannual reports that include structured reflections about their project, the collaborative process, and the overall experience with the Fellows Program.

As the project implementation phase concludes, Fellows submit a Final Report and produce one or more Final Products. Examples of Final Products include training guides, apps, handbooks, media products, outreach materials, policy briefs, strategic plans, recommendations for policy makers, workshop agendas and notes, digital and non-digital maps, conference presentations, publishable manuscripts, models, conference posters, and thesis or dissertation chapters. Project deliverables can also be determined by the community.

NOTE: Final Products should acknowledge support from the Center for Collaborative Conservation. The CCC will use information from Final Products as well as information included in reports (NOT your actual project data) in future journal articles, social media posts, regional newsletters, internal reports, and for fund-raising. By accepting a CCC Fellowship, you will be giving us permission to use your Fellows' products and reports for these purposes. Your acceptance of the award also constitutes agreement to post your final products and your Fellows' Project Report on the CCC website (if your report contains sensitive information that should not be shared with the public, we will honor this).

PROJECT TEAMS

By definition, collaborative conservation projects require the work of a team. However, for some Fellows, applying as an individual is the best fit, and their project team are not explicitly included as part of the Fellows Program. For others, it will work best for the entire project team to participate in the Fellows program. Therefore, we accept proposals from both individuals and project teams.

For a team project, we suggest that each team include a **Project Sponsor**, who helps to guide the process, and one or more **Fellows** who do much of the project work. Project Teams might also include **Additional Team Members** who can provide expertise, a connection to the community, or other support. Examples of some of the different ways a project team might be constructed include:

- A CSU graduate student (Fellow) and their major professor or faculty advisor (Project Sponsor)
- A practitioner (Project Sponsor), a graduate student (Fellow), and an Indigenous community member (additional team member)
- A CSU or other university faculty member (Project Sponsor), a graduate student (Fellow), and a practitioner (Fellow)

The differences in these team roles are described in more detail in Table 1.

Table 1. Suggested Team Roles

Project Sponsor	Fellow	Additional Team Member
▪ Serves as a guide, project manager, and mentor. ▪ Has a stake in the project, the Fellow, and the outcomes. ▪ Often (but not necessarily) will have previous experience with collaborative conservation.	▪ Coordinates and implements one or more aspects of the project. ▪ Gains skills and experience in leadership, collaboration, and management of a conservation project.	▪ Provides expertise or connection to community. ▪ Supports implementation of one or more aspects of the project.

BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION

Whether participating as an individual or a member of a project team, there are many benefits to being part of the Fellows Program. As described in Table 2, these include funding, the opportunity to add to your knowledge and skills, add to your network, and be part of a community of practice.

Table 2. Benefits for each role

Project Sponsor	Fellow	Additional Team Member
▪ Gain funding, support, and other resources to carry out a meaningful project in collaborative conservation. ▪ Sharpen professional skills in collaborative conservation. ▪ Sharpen skills as a project manager and a mentor. ▪ Contribute to the field of collaborative conservation. ▪ Join a community of practice.	▪ Gain funding and support to work on a meaningful project that will contribute to the field of collaborative conservation. ▪ Build professional skills in collaborative conservation. ▪ Grow leadership skills. ▪ Build a network for future jobs and promotions. ▪ Develop cultural competencies and awareness. ▪ Be part of a supportive cohort.	▪ Gain funding, support, and other resources to carry out a meaningful project in collaborative conservation. ▪ Sharpen professional skills in collaborative conservation. ▪ Sharpen skills as a leader and mentor. ▪ Contribute to the field of collaborative conservation. ▪ Join a community of practice.

PARTICIPATION EXPECTATIONS

The Fellows Program is a formal program and includes specific expectations for each role. These are described in Table 3.

Table 3 Expectations for Each Role

Activity	Project Sponsor	Fellow	Additional Team Member
Training Retreat (4 days, April 2027)	V	R	V
Cohort Trainings (five 3-hour trainings)	V	R	V
Triannual Reports	R	R	R
Final Report	R	R	R
Final Products	R	R	R
Final Program Evaluation (September 2027)	R	R	R

Key: "R" = required; "V" = voluntary

****NOTE: A major benefit of the CCC Fellows Program is for the Fellows to be part of a learning cohort. This cohort model requires that Fellows must attend all meetings and the in-person training. Failure to do so without approval will result in expulsion from the program and loss of funds.**

Questions? Please contact Allison Brody, CCC Associate Director of Learning,
allison.brody@colostate.edu