

SALAZAR CENTER
FOR NORTH AMERICAN CONSERVATION



*Nature doesn't recognize borders.
Our work transcends them.*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

From my office in Denver, I have a clear view of the sprawling and majestic Rocky Mountains. Stretching 3,000 miles from northernmost British Columbia to northern New Mexico, this range is vast and timeless, at least on a human scale. Like so many landscapes across North America, the Rockies inspire awe, with an enormity that is nearly impossible to fathom. This also points to a paradox: the immense scale and omnipresence of nature can make it hard for us to ‘see’ it or grasp its profundity in our lives.

But nature is fundamental to humankind. It graces us with home, family, community, inspiration, and solace. It provides the raw materials we need for life: clean air, clean water, healthy food, energy, medicine, shelter, and a safe climate. We are inseparable and interdependent. And yet, nature’s ubiquity confers a sort of invisibility that can invite neglect. This is part of the reason we have brought many natural systems we love and depend upon to the brink of collapse.

At the Salazar Center, we believe it’s time to make nature visible and to take responsibility for protecting and nurturing nature as we would our own families.

In today’s world of change and uncertainty, the Salazar Center is catalyzing the next generation of conservation leadership, practice, and thinking. We believe the human species has both the intellectual capacity and moral inclination to ensure nature’s well-being. As old beliefs, behaviors, and rules fall from favor, their decline creates space for innovation and opportunity. The Salazar Center is cultivating the ideas, leaders, and policies that can fill this space to chart a sustainable and shared path forward.

We rely on you—our partners and champions—to help us achieve these goals. We can’t do this alone, nor do we want to. We need your ideas, expertise, and financial support. Together, we can imagine and build a future in which all life thrives. Join us today, and let’s get to work!

Leslie A. Harroun, Executive Director

“I think the area of conservation, how we protect our lands our air and our water, can be a great unifier for a very divided world and a very divided nation.”

• Secretary Ken Salazar





MISSION

The Salazar Center's mission is to spark conservation innovation and action to secure a thriving future for North America's lands, waters, and the life they support.

HISTORY & GOALS

Ken Salazar, former U.S. Senator, U.S. Secretary of the Interior, and Ambassador to Mexico, and Tony Frank, Chancellor of Colorado State University, founded the Salazar Center in 2018 to unite people on behalf of nature. Today, the Salazar Center is a trusted convener and capacity builder that brings people together across boundaries to meet shared conservation challenges. At its core, the Salazar Center is an incubator of people and ideas aspiring to transform our relationship with nature through stewardship and cultural understanding. With an emphasis on our reciprocal relationship with nature and its shared benefits, we seek to:

- Revitalize landscape integrity across borders and ecosystems, from wildlands to urban centers.
- Bolster the climate resilience of cities through actionable science that employs nature-inspired strategies and local expertise.
- Ignite collective care of nature by connecting people across jurisdictions, cultures, and sectors in ways that uplift and employ different ways of knowing and working.

“What inspires me most about the Salazar Center’s approach is that it empowers people doing critical work to protect natural systems, and it then adds the structure and support needed to scale innovation and bring about real change.”

• Tony Frank, CSU System Chancellor

Nature needs all of us to thrive.



500 YEARS + OF COMBINED EXPERIENCE

among board and staff in conservation science, management, advocacy, policy, law, and philanthropy

STRENGTHENING CAPACITY: PEREGRINE ACCELERATOR & URBAN CLIMATE RESILIENCE



64

nonprofits, tribes, and municipalities served

143

volunteer proposal evaluators



60

expert trainers and mentors



\$1,170,000

granted to awardees

5

Challenges, Accelerators, and Research Awards since 2019



CATALYZING THE FIELD: OUR CONVENINGS



1700+

attendees from across Canada, the U.S., Mexico, and Indigenous Nations

135

fundors



920

nonprofit organizations and universities

222



representatives from municipal, county, state, and national agencies

Supporting conservation impact today,
creating the enabling conditions for transformative change tomorrow.

OUR CONTRIBUTION TO CHANGE

The Salazar Center connects people across borders, cultures, and sectors to catalyze 21st Century conservation thinking and doing. Richly interwoven and mutually reinforcing, our three pillars of work advance exceptional conservation outcomes for people and nature.

- i. We invest in people, projects, and partnerships to strengthen capacity, support emerging leaders and partnerships, and foster cross-border impact.
- ii. We convene and cultivate alliances to address complex conservation challenges through understanding and collaborative problem-solving.
- iii. We incubate ideas and relationships to evolve how we think about and embed our responsibility for nature across society.

Ultimately, our work connects and elevates the architects and architecture of conservation progress—the individuals, ideas, and institutions needed to generate a thriving future for all life across the continent.



“In our view, the Salazar Center has become an essential convenor of the conversations helping drive more ambitious and effective conservation across North America. The Doris Duke Foundation has been proud to support the Center and its vision of a nature-positive future.”

• Sacha Spector, Director, Environment Program, Doris Duke Foundation

LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

The Salazar Center is ready to take our next bold step to expand our influence and impact in North America—and we invite you to take it with us. With your support, we can transform promising ideas into lasting impact, nurture the next generation of conservation leaders, and ensure a thriving natural world for future generations. Together, we have the power to unite people for nature.





PILLAR 1: INVEST IN PEOPLE, PROJECTS, AND PARTNERSHIPS

The Salazar Center’s Peregrine Accelerator for Conservation Impact strengthens and supports a cross-cutting community of North American partners to deliver meaningful conservation impact in vital transboundary ecosystems.

The Peregrine Accelerator supercharges select conservation projects in transboundary ecoregions, or “nests,” that offer significant opportunities to increase landscape connectivity, reverse biodiversity loss, elevate new voices, and build climate resilience. Held annually, the Peregrine Accelerator is an intensive six-month program that invests time, money, and resources in cohorts of project teams to enable them to put their conservation ideas into action faster and more effectively.

Over the past three years, this innovative program has successfully brought together cohorts of project teams in the Rio Grande-Rio Bravo River Basin and from across the New England-Acadian Forests of the North Atlantic to improve, sometimes dramatically, project implementation, fundraising, and community engagement.

WITH YOUR SUPPORT, IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS, THE SALAZAR CENTER WILL:

- Expand the Peregrine Accelerator to three new transboundary regions, including Baja-Sonora in 2026, strengthening the capacity of 100 organizations and 200 individuals to achieve meaningful and measurable conservation impact and associated human benefits.
- Establish a Peregrine Community of Practice that engages Accelerator alumni with new cohorts as mentors and trainers; curates cross-cohort trainings that magnify topical throughlines and build connection across nest landscapes; and experiments in co-creating metrics and impact reporting on shared topics of interest across nest landscapes.
- Build a body of evidence for next-generation, place-based conservation that recognizes and respects diverse ways of working, measuring, and knowing, using it to amplify best practices and success stories.

“A great experience from start to finish. The program brings together an amazing group of mentors and teams, working together to develop and strengthen skills and tools that made us a stronger team and gave us the confidence to take the next steps to set up a larger-scale project.”

• Cassandra McCuen,
Colorado Rio Grande Conservation
Foundation project team,
2023 Peregrine Accelerator cohort



PILLAR 2: CONVENE AND CULTIVATE ALLIANCES

Trusted and valued as a convener, the Salazar Center identifies and activates high-leverage interventions to the continent's most pressing conservation challenges.

The Salazar Center convenes practitioners, networks, thought leaders, and policymakers from across disciplines, sectors, and the continent who share our vision of a thriving natural world in balance with human societies. We use a relationship-based engagement model to generate cross-sector dialogue and cultivate alliances across diverse—and often competing—stakeholders to address complex environmental problems.

Our biennial International Symposium on Conservation Impact, a premier event of its kind in North America, regularly attracts high-level, influential speakers and myriad nonprofit and Indigenous leaders, policy professionals, conservation finance experts, donors, and scholars. Discussions explore the complexities of achieving lasting conservation across landscapes and jurisdictions, of building climate resilience in cities and coastal regions, and of honoring the expertise of diverse communities within our current political ecology. Our Symposium reports distill participant insights and priorities to help our broad community chart an informed path forward.

Recent Salazar Center convenings have included a 2024 Water Finance Roundtable in partnership with the Conservation Finance Network, and a 2025 Indigenous Engagement Training for non-Indigenous practitioners and policymakers.





“I walked into the Symposium feeling lost and hopeless, but [after hearing] stories about Indigenous-led conservation ... I feel more empowered! It all gave me a sense of direction and orientation in what I need to do.”

2025 Symposium attendee

WITH YOUR SUPPORT, IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS, THE SALAZAR CENTER WILL:

- Host three symposia in North American cities representing a broad cross-section of communities, cultures, and landscapes.
- Offer at least 15 convenings on emerging conservation topics that increase cross-sector understanding, idea generation, ambition, and change at scale. These convenings will help us take a clear-eyed look at what is working and what is not. Facilitated, deliberative, and action-oriented, these gatherings will bring together leaders from across nations, sectors, and cultures, bridging divides in a way that facilitates learning, trust, and collaboration, and that removes barriers to change.
- Inform and influence North American conservation policy by showcasing and promulgating valuable conservation-related knowledge, research, and models.



PILLAR 3: INCUBATE IDEAS AND RELATIONSHIPS

The Salazar Center's Conservation Fellows program is a leading resource for transboundary conservation expertise and innovation across North America.

Beginning in 2026, the Salazar Center will ignite a new phase of conservation research, innovation, and action by launching our inaugural Conservation Fellows Program. This program will bring together mid-career professionals from a broad cross-section of society in pursuit of transformative shifts in how we think about and co-exist with nature. Awareness is growing about the need to incentivize and normalize regenerative practices across society in such sectors as energy, agriculture, technology, and finance. Fortunately, North America boasts a long history of ingenuity, both in conservation and political ecology. The Salazar Center will take advantage of this by identifying and supporting annual cohorts of forward-thinking fellows who will collaboratively explore, propose, and assess innovative solutions that deliver superior conservation outcomes.

WITH YOUR SUPPORT, IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS, THE SALAZAR CENTER WILL:

- Work with our partners to identify fellowship topics that offer high-leverage interventions for sustaining our lands and waters for future generations.
- Support annual cohorts of fellows in partnership with researchers, NGOs, policymakers, Indigenous communities, and business leaders that will advance understanding of and co-create solutions to wicked conservation challenges.
- Engage fellows in the content development of at least one transboundary, cross-sector convening over the course of their annual fellowship term.
- Facilitate the publication of fellows' articles, case studies, op-eds, blogs, etc.
- Encourage and support the development of interdisciplinary collaborations and strategic partnerships beyond the fellowships that advance a regenerative political ecology for the benefit of both people and nature.

YOUR SUPPORT WILL HELP US ACHIEVE OUR 2030 GOALS AS WE:

1. Launch Peregrine Accelerator cohorts in at least three new transboundary 'nests', catalyzing meaningful and measurable increases in the integrity and connectivity of biodiversity in important transboundary regions.
2. Hold 15 convenings that position the Salazar Center as a leading incubator of conservation-centered knowledge and solutions, laying the groundwork for institutions, policies, and practices that deliver better outcomes faster.
3. Focus the expertise, research, and networks of our Conservation Fellows on systemic solutions to conservation challenges, such as integrating human responsibility for and reciprocity with nature into our political economy.
4. Grow our talented and passionate staff from four to seven full-time professionals who represent the communities with whom we work.
5. Expand our expert Advisory Board to 17 members representing key constituencies from across the continent and actively engage them in overseeing the Salazar Center's strategy, fundraising, culture, brand, and leadership development.



DONATION INFORMATION

All contributions to Colorado State University are subject to the gift policies in place at the time of the gift.



For more information, please visit:
giving.colostate.edu/gift-stewardship



Created to represent connectivity across the continent, this map is an artistic interpretation of migratory pathways of birds and other species in North America.

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JOIN US ON THIS JOURNEY.

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