

Colorado Field Ornithologists
Colorado Birding Challenge Conservation Grant 2026
Project Proposal Submission Instructions

Submission Deadline: 15 February 2026, 11:59PM

The Colorado Birding Challenge is a fun, county-based birding and conservation event organized by Colorado Field Ornithologists (CFO). The objectives of the Challenge are to engage hundreds of birders in a fun day of finding and learning about Colorado's birds, to provide support for the expanding programs and work of Colorado Field Ornithologists, and especially to raise funds for an important conservation initiative. Past Challenge conservation initiative grant recipients have received from \$20,000 to nearly \$40,000 to support their important work to conserve Colorado birds and their threatened habitats. Organizations and individuals with conservation projects impacting Colorado birds and their habitats are invited to submit proposals.

Proposal Evaluation

Projects should be conservation focused, including eligible activities such as on-the-ground habitat restoration and/or protection, research, monitoring, management, outreach, and education.

The project must be completed within 2 years of the proposed start date given in the proposal timeline and the proposed start date should be prior to September 2026.

Projects taking place outside of Colorado, including international projects, will be considered if the project demonstrates a substantial benefit to birds that breed, winter, or migrate through Colorado.

Projects will be ranked based on their conservation impact. Evaluation criteria include conservation status of the target species (e.g., T&E, Species of Greatest Conservation Need, those being considered for listing), the number of species affected, the conservation status of the habitats and ecosystem that will be impacted, the importance of the species to the Colorado birding community, and the range of the species in Colorado. Highly rated projects will have a lasting benefit to Colorado birds and the habitats on which they rely. Please reference the following websites for information about priority species/habitats/actions:

- Colorado Species of Greatest Conservation Need (Colorado Parks and Wildlife) based on the [State Wildlife Action Plan](#) 2025
- US Fish and Wildlife Service Bird Species of Concern [list](#)
- Partners in Flight [databases](#)

Reporting Requirements

An interim progress report halfway through the proposed project timeline and a final report will be required to be submitted to the CFO Conservation Committee and the CFO Board.

CFO requests that the grant recipient (or their organization) assist in creating communication content leading up to the event to help promote it (primarily providing images or other details as needed).

CFO highly encourages publishing a full-length science article of the funded work in *Colorado Birds: Quarterly Journal of Colorado Field Ornithologists* and/or presenting the findings at the annual CFO convention in the year following the project.

Guidelines for Project Proposal

Project proposals must not exceed 2 pages written using size 12 Times New Roman or Arial font. The project proposal should include:

- Title of Project
- PI/Organization Information
 - Specify who will be the project lead/manager (include contact information)
 - Specify which entity will be receiving and administering the funding
 - Brief synopsis of the individual PI or organization's mission, past conservation accomplishments, and capability to accomplish the project's proposed work (less than half a page)
- Project Description
 - Brief background placing the project in a broader conservation context
 - Significance of project to the conservation of Colorado's birds and threatened ecosystems, including goals, objectives, and deliverables of the project.
 - Concise methods including a timetable for implementation of tasks, who will be conducting the work, and the locations where the project will be conducted.

Additional Items (not included in 2-page limit)

- Project budget (in table format). The Challenge-funded portion of the budget cannot exceed the funds raised by the 2025 COBC which was \$20,000. The delivered funds may be less than the budget total but will not exceed the proposed budget. Unused funds must be returned.
 - include financial and in-kind resources from other sources
 - enumerate the labor, equipment, and other items required for the project
 - include overhead/administrative costs to be charged, if any (Overhead rates at or below 10% will be preferred in the selection process, but negotiable).
- Resume/CV of Principal Investigator or project leader and all project staff
- Other materials may be included in the application packet but please limit attachments to material that you believe will help the Conservation Committee to better understand your project.

All documents (the 2-page project proposal, budget, CVs) must be submitted in **one (1) single electronic PDF file** to Sally Waterhouse at smwaterh@owu.edu no later than **11:59PM on February 15, 2026**.

The CFO Conservation Committee will notify applicants of status by **1 May 2026**.