Colored Khovanov homology is a categorification of the colored Jones polynomial. To each integer $n \geq 2$ and a diagram $D$ of a link, it assigns a bigraded chain complex $\{C_{i,j}^{Kh}(D, n)\}$. The graded Euler characteristic of the homology groups $\{H_{i,j}^{Kh}(D, n)\}$ gives the $n$th colored Jones polynomial. It has typically been difficult to extract topological information from colored Khovanov homology due to its dependence on the combinatorics of link diagrams. Inspired by Bar-Natan’s formulation of Khovanov homology for tangles and other approaches to topological formulations for Khovanov homology by McDougall and Seidel-Smith, we will give a construction of colored Khovanov homology of a knot in terms of embedded surfaces in the complement to more intrinsically motivate it using topology, and we will discuss potential applications. (Received January 29, 2019)