Greetings and Welcome to this extraordinary opportunity. Thank you to all who have helped make this event happen on such short notice and thank you all for being here in respect and celebration. Our local Northern San Juan chapter of the national non-profit Great Old Broads for Wilderness is honored to host this event. As an organization dedicated to protection of wild lands and waters, we cannot speak of our public lands without acknowledging that the original Indigenous inhabitants of what we now call public (and private) lands were forceably removed from their homelands – displaced from their hunting, gathering and fishing grounds, their sacred and ceremonial sites and the landscapes and non-human relations of their home communities. We gather today on the traditional lands of the Nuche (also known as the Ute) whose numerous bands were separated and relocated against their will to Fort Duschene, UT and Ignacio and Towoac, CO. This region was also visited and appreciated by many other tribes traveling, trading and temporarily residing in this valley.

This land acknowledgement is a mere baby step toward naming the harm caused by colonization to Indigenous people and the earth. We have a long journey ahead to restore trust and make reparation for this past. We also recognize that this Nuche territory is not only a matter of history, but a very real and present reality. This is home to the Nuche past, present and future and we acknowledge their connection to this place as we gather here today. Thank you.

It is my deep privilege to introduce to you members of the Lummi Nation. Welcome Phreddie, Diron, Doug and Jewell