Thank you Program Manager Jacobs and Committee members for the opportunity to address you this morning. My name is Robyn Cascade and I am the volunteer leader of the Northern San Juan chapter of Great Old Broads for Wilderness. Our national organization’s mission is the protection of wildlands and waterways.

Due to the alarming proliferation of trails and resulting habitat fragmentation across our state, our 9 Colorado chapters have been meeting for over two years to elevate a united voice to protect wildlife habitat and corridors on public lands. We have participated in revising the non-motorized grant criteria as well as the Planning Trails with Wildlife in Mind document. In addition, we regularly comment on grant applications and communicate with District and Area Wildlife Managers. In July of 2019, I presented to the CPW Commission, highlighting our organization’s concern regarding habitat fragmentation.

Today, I would like to address two concerns that are interconnected. The first is reflected in my comments you received last week regarding the lack of diverse stakeholders in trail planning processes as exemplified by a process in my own community. I will not reiterate those concerns today but rather wish to emphasize the need for this committee to hold trail proponents and grant recipients accountable for engaging diverse trail users in planning as well as folks whose livelihood - such as ranchers and outfitters - is impacted by trail development.

Secondly, Great Old Broads for Wilderness urges this committee to take a deep and thorough look at cumulative impacts of trail development. Currently, to my knowledge, funding is distributed project by project with little to no attention to cumulative impacts over space and time. In our opinion, this negligence is a critical failure of the State Trails program and must be rectified based upon science with the guidance of CPW wildlife experts. We ask that until CPW (and this committee in particular) addresses the cumulative deleterious impacts of trail proliferation, that the State Trails Committee distribute funding solely to maintenance of existing trails, education and enforcement, and habitat restoration projects.

Thank you for your time and attention.

CPW STC meeting 12.4.20 public comment (2 minutes)