

Dear Eve,

My deep apologies for the delay in my response as I have been a bit overcommitted these last few weeks with volunteer tasks (at times out of reception surveying for wildlife,) family and self-care and am just now replying to emails.

I am extremely honored and humbled to have been nominated (Thank you, Carrie!) and selected for this inaugural award as one of Ouray County's Exceptional Women. My sincere gratitude for your initiative to highlight each individual and our organizations and to your entire committee for organizing and coordinating the upcoming event.

In reading and rereading your invitation, I felt excited about the celebration on October 5 and especially to stand beside extraordinary women from our community who will be honored. Upon returning home recently, I saw the announcement in the *Plaindealer* which mentions that guests are expected to pay \$50 minimum (or \$100 as a host) to attend. As a volunteer, I donate my time and resources because I am passionately committed to causes and issues. Though recognition is welcome and appreciated; acknowledgement is not what drives my enthusiasm. With no intention of being ungrateful or disrespectful, I am not comfortable personally inviting family, friends and supporters of Great Old Broads for Wilderness to pay to honor me though, as a retired Ridgway teacher and member of this community, I deeply value Fortuna Tierra's scholarship program. I would feel much more comfortable with FortunaTierra continuing to advertise the October reception publicly in the newspaper, on social media, with posters and any other methods so that the whole community knows they are invited and my personal contacts and organization members don't feel any obligation to attend out of concern that I might be hurt by their absence. Those announcements could also solicit donations (in our honor) for people who are not able to attend or who wish to contribute a smaller amount. I would be more than happy to post flyers around town (though I am not on social media so can't help there.)

I hope my sentiment is not in any way offensive to you or your committee. I am expressing my honest, authentic concern and my discomfort with your request as a condition of accepting this award. If you decide that these conditions are imperative, I totally understand and will regretfully need to decline your most gracious award. Please know I speak from my heart with gratitude and great appreciation for the generosity of Fortuna Tierra. I am happy to chat by phone if further conversation is desired or warranted.

I did receive your phone message late last night Eve and wanted to send this correspondence in advance of any conversation.

Again, my deep gratitude,  
Robyn Cascade  
(she/ella)