

SPEAKER AND PRESENTER INFORMATION

25TH ANNIVERSARY MEETING OF THE AMERICAN CHESTNUT FOUNDATION

SANDY BRUE, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, CHIEF OF INTERPRETATION AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT, ABRAHAM LINCOLN BIRTHPLACE. Transferring to Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historical Site in 2004 as Chief of Interpretation and Resource Management for the coming 2009 Bicentennial of Lincoln's birth, Ms. Brue began working for the National Park Service in 1988 with Boston National Historical Park. She has alternated between natural and historical parks throughout her career. During the last nineteen years Ms. Brue has worked for Salem Maritime National Historic Site, Ozark National Scenic Riverways, Sagamore Hill National Historic Site (home of Theodore Roosevelt) and Kenai Fjords National Park, in Alaska. Ms. Brue is a graduate of the University of Massachusetts-Boston and earned her masters degree in history from Alaska Pacific University.

BRENT WAHLQUIST, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF SURFACE MINING RECLAMATION & ENFORCEMENT, APPALACHIAN REGION. Brent T. Wahlquist was confirmed by the Senate in August 2007 (on the 30th Anniversary of the Surface Mining Act) to serve as Director of Interior's Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSM). Since 2002 he has been the Regional Director for the Appalachian Region. OSM works with colleges, universities and other State and Federal agencies to further the science of reclaiming mined lands and protecting the environment — including initiatives to promote planting more trees and establishing much-needed wildlife habitat. In 2004, Brent Wahlquist, along with representatives of the US Forest Service, the federal Department of Energy, the Appalachian coal mining states of Kentucky, Maryland, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia, the coal industry, environmental organizations, land companies, and academia signed a Statement of Mutual Intent to form the Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative (ARRI), a broad-based citizen/industry/government program working to encourage the establishment of healthy and productive high-value hardwood forests on active and abandoned coal mine lands. In 2005 he received a Presidential Rank Award for Meritorious Executive Service. Born in Utah and raised in Idaho, Wahlquist holds a PhD in biology from New Mexico State University, and both a masters and a bachelors degree in botany from Brigham Young University.

VICTOR M. DAVIS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, FORESTER/SOIL SCIENTIST FOR THE OFFICE OF SURFACE MINING RECLAMATION & ENFORCEMENT Victor Davis has worked for Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, Knoxville Field Office as a Reclamation Review Specialist and Forester for 29 years. He is a charter member the Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative Core Team and Science Team. He was selected as recipient of the 2006 Forest Conservationist of the Year Award by the Tennessee Wildlife Federation. He has B.S. degree in Forestry from the University of Tennessee.

MACK PRICHARD, TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION, STATE NATURALIST EMERITUS. Mack Prichard began his career with the state's conservation department when he was just 16 years old, as a seasonal naturalist at Shelby Forest State Park near Memphis. In addition to developing a profound knowledge of natural and cultural history, he had a gift for connecting with the public. Following a series of promotions (including one to head the new archeology division in 1971), he moved to the Conservation Education section where he became the state's first (and so far its only) state naturalist. On May 24, Governor Phil Bredesen signed Senate Joint Resolution 1007 commending Mack's half-century as "The Conservation Conscience" of Tennessee and conferring on him the title Tennessee State Park Naturalist Emeritus. Mack is a most eloquent spokesman for all things related to the modern history of conservation in Tennessee and in demand as a speaker to groups all across Tennessee and elsewhere for almost 40 years.

BILL OWENS, SINGER, SONGWRITER AND MUSICIAN Singer, songwriter and musician, Bill Owens, joined forces with Dollywood, The American Chestnut Foundation, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, and the American Eagle Foundation to bring back the endangered American chestnut tree to the Great Smoky Mountains area. Owens, uncle to famed singer Dolly Parton, became

fascinated at a young age by the unusual chestnut tree stories he heard told by his dad and Dolly's dad — including how a big old hollow chestnut tree was used by one of Dolly's uncles as a wedding suite and temporary home. Since 1986, he has planted about 70,000 trees at Dollywood, one of the most visited theme parks in the United States. Owens is credited with giving his young niece Dolly her start in the music business, having taken her to Nashville right after she graduated from high school. He has written over 800 songs, including an environmental awareness song titled "Cactus Clyde," and is a regular Dollywood performer in the "Kin Folk Band" at the Back Porch Theater.