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N E W S R E L E A S E

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Nature restoration begins with imagination, Babbitt says

Restoration of our natural resources begins with imagination, said Bruce Babbitt, who will deliver a lecture April 22 on “Nebraska’s Water Future: Feast or Famine?” as part of the 2007-2008 E.N. Thompson Forum on World Issues.

Babbitt’s lecture, which originates from the Lied Center for Performing Arts at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, will be simulcast at 6 p.m. at the Harms Advanced Technology Center at Western Nebraska Community College in Scottsbluff.

“Restoration is about having the power to visualize, to say that we can imagine a landscape that we don’t see today, that we can create, or recreate, a landscape that was seen by Lewis and Clark, Kit Carson, and our forebears,” said Babbitt. “We can look to the past, and by understanding the past, visualize the future. And then engage communities and conservationists in the act of restoration. That has a lot of magic and power.”

Babbitt was U.S. secretary of the interior from 1993 to 2001, governor of Arizona from 1978-87 and attorney general of Arizona from 1975-78. As governor, he brought environmental and resource management to the forefront in the state. He negotiated and steered to passage the Arizona Groundwater Management Act of 1980, which remains the most comprehensive water regulatory system in the nation. He was also responsible for creation of the Arizona Department of Water Resources and the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality.

Appointed secretary of the interior by President Clinton, Babbitt led the creation of the forest plan in the Pacific Northwest, restoration of the Florida Everglades, passage of the California Desert Protection Act, and legislation for the National Wildlife Refuge system. He pioneered the use of habitat conservation plans under the Endangered Species Act and worked with Clinton to create 22 new national monuments. He is the author of “Cities in the Wilderness,” recently issued by Island Press, in which he lays out a new vision of land use in America. He currently serves as a director of the World Wildlife Fund.

Babbitt’s lecture is the final event in the 20th season of the Thompson Forum, the theme of which is “Changing Nature.”

The Thompson Forum brings a diversity of viewpoints on international and public policy issues to the citizens of Nebraska at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The series was named in honor of E.N. “Jack” Thompson, who served as president of the Cooper Foundation from 1964 to 1990 and as its chairman from 1990 until his death in 2002. Thompson established the series to promote better understanding of world events and issues for all Nebraskans.

All lectures and simulcasts are free and open to the public. To RSVP or for more information, contact Carla Stein at (308) 635-6050 or at steinc@wncc.net.

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