# ***Meet the Speakers***

**John Weir** is currently a research associate in the Natural Resource Ecology and Management Department at Oklahoma State University. He was also the superintendent of the OSU Research Range for 16 years. He teaches two prescribed fire courses, conducts fire ecology research and has extension responsibilities relating to prescribed fire training and working with landowners to form prescribed burn associations. He has assisted with forming over 30 burn associations in seven states. In the past 25 years he has conducted over 1,000 prescribed burns in vegetation ranging from shortgrass prairie to Oak-Pine forest in seven states. He also has a book out titled Conducted Prescribed Fires: A Comprehensive Manual. He is currently the president of the Oklahoma Prescribed Burn Association and on the board of directors for the Coalition of Prescribed Fire Councils, Great Plains Fire Exchange and Oak Woodland and Forest Fire Consortium.

**Dr. Dirac Twidwell** is a Rangeland and Fire Ecologist at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. A major component of his research is to understand how modern changes in fire regimes and land use alter the resilience of Great Plains ecosystems. His lab team is developing models and conducting experimental manipulations to evaluate how variability in fire regimes have changed as a result of modern social and ecological drivers and how these feedbacks influence degrade the productivity and diversity valued in modern landscapes. To better understand the underlying mechanisms of these relationships, his lab has linked knowledge from applied fire physics to fire ecology and have been expanding on the model, through additional simulations and field experimentation, to include human decision-making and greater ecological complexity. This has led to a continued focus on the role of extreme fire in Great Plains ecosystems and its potential application in ecosystem management. At this conference, Dirac will discuss new fire research being conducted in his lab at the University of Nebraska, new collaborations that are building greater research capacity to address emerging threats, and the opportunities and needs for integrating research into land management in Nebraska.