



CAPITOL CITY SPEAKERS BUREAU

We help you thrill your audience!



Chad Pregracke

Travels from: Illinois

Fee Range: \$5,001 - \$7,500

Chad Pregracke is a modern day leader and proof that one person can make a difference. What started as one man's crusade at age 23 to clean up the Mississippi River, has evolved into a cultural movement that had resulted in over 7 million pounds of garbage being cleaned out of America's rivers. The vision and leadership skills that Chad possesses have inspired more than 70,000 people to volunteer their time and resources.

Chad has always loved the water, growing up in Hampton, Illinois with the Mississippi River literally in his backyard. His family spent the majority of their time on, in and around the river. Chad's first jobs were working on the river, as a commercial shell diver, commercial fisherman and barge hand. Working on the river gave him a first hand, close up look at the shores that were littered with trash. At age 17, Chad began calling government agencies to tell them about the problem. None of his calls resulted in government action and the trash problem seemed to be escalating every year. Chad decided that it was up to him to make a difference and clean the rivers.

At age 23, Chad founded Living Lands & Waters, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to preserving our nation's rivers. Chad worked tirelessly calling businesses to ask for an appointment just to tell the story of what he was seeing along the banks of the river. Chad heard no during every phone call and was near emotional bottom. After begging with a receptionist at Alcoa, Chad finally secured his first appointment. Alcoa took a chance on the young river kid and gave him his first check for \$8,400, enough to cover expenses for his first clean up project. In less than ten years, the organization has grown to include 10 full-time employees, a fleet of 4 barges, a towboat, 6 workboats, 2 skid steers, 5 work trucks and a large box truck to haul trash. Chad remains the driving force behind the organization and still jumps in the water, gets his hands dirty and tosses trash into the boat. His efforts have earned him global notoriety.

The international media have been drawn to Chad's grassroots American story, and he's been covered by television broadcasts ranging from England to Germany to Japan and Australia. His autobiography, *From the Bottom Up*, was published in 2007 by the National Geographic Society and has received excellent reviews.

Chad has been honored with dozens of awards for his work, including the prestigious Jefferson Award for Public Service. This award is America's version of the Nobel Prize and was bestowed by First Lady Laura Bush. Other benchmark recognition includes the Social Entrepreneurship Award from the Manhattan Institute of Public Policy, the Achievement in Conservation Award presented by the Daughters of the American Revolution, the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration Award (NOAA) and in 2013 Chad won the CNN Hero of the Year.

Most Requested Programs...

- From the Bottom Up: Clean America's Rivers
- Results, Not Rhetoric: How to Mobilize Your Team