

Sam D. Hamilton



On September 1, 2009, Sam D. Hamilton was sworn-in as the 15th Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the nation's principal Federal agency dedicated to the conservation of fish and wildlife and their habitats. Hamilton brought to the position over 30 years of experience with the Service, beginning when he was 15 years old working as a Youth Conservation Corps member on the Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge in Mississippi. Prior to his appointment as Director, he served as Regional Director of the agency's Southeast Region in Atlanta, Georgia. As head of the Southeast Region, made up of ten states and Caribbean, he provided oversight and management of a \$484 million budget and a 1,500-person work-force dedicated to protecting more than 350 federally listed threatened and endangered species and operating 128 national wildlife refuges.

Throughout his career, Hamilton exhibited outstanding leadership and fostered creative and innovative solutions to the challenges facing wildlife conservation. In the Southeast Region, he supported efforts leading to the establishment of a carbon sequestration program that helped biologists to restore roughly 80,000 acres of wildlife habitat. His emphasis on partnership activities bolstered the Service's fisheries program and helped establish the Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership to restore vital aquatic habitats across the region.

Hamilton provided key leadership and oversight to the Interior Department's restoration work in the Everglades, the nation's fabled "River of Grass", and the largest ecosystem restoration project in the country. He oversaw the extensive recovery and restoration efforts required following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, which devastated coastal wetlands, wildlife refuges, and other wildlife habitat areas along the Gulf of Mexico.

Hamilton remains a strong advocate for the National Wildlife Refuge System, comprised of 550 units and encompassing 150 million acres of protected habitat. Throughout his career he supported the expansion of existing refuges and the addition of new refuges as an essential step in providing for America's wildlife heritage.

Earlier in his career, Hamilton served as Assistant Regional Director of Ecological Services in Atlanta and as the Service's Texas State Administrator in Austin. Hamilton graduated from Mississippi State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in biology in 1977.

Sam strongly believes no single entity, whether Federal, State, or private, can ensure the sustainability of the nation's fish and wildlife resources working independently, and continues to work toward building collaborative partnerships that allow for the development of ideas and solutions that are greater than any one entity, working on its own, can accomplish.