

Mamie Parker

By: Chelsea Hurtado

Mamie Parker is a seminal and accomplished biologist, having served with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for over 30 years. She became the first Black woman to serve as assistant director of Fisheries and Habitat Conservation and the first African American to lead a USFWS regional office as the Northeast Service Regional Director. Born in Arkansas, she's been interested in biology and the outdoors her entire life, inspired by her single mother and one of her teachers in high school. Throughout the years, she has received multiple recognitions such as the Arkansas Hall of Fame, Emmaline Moore Award, Champions of the Chesapeake Award, and Recipient of The 2020 John L. Morris Award by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. Parker constantly advocates for more accessible open natural spaces for Black communities and increasing diversity in the wildlife biology or natural sciences field. Today, she serves on the board of several environmental and educational institutions including the National Wildlife Federation and continues to be a motivational speaker and leadership coach.

“I think about my cousins or people of color. They may not relate to an endangered species they will never see, but they will appreciate a butterfly.” - Mamie Parker



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Mamie Parker is supporting the passing of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act, which is focused on conserving fish and wildlife species whether they are tribal, state, or part of wildlife agencies. The Act would see "\$1.3 billion annually to state fish and wildlife agencies and an additional \$97.5 million for tribal fish and wildlife management"(NWF). She believes that the funding of this

act would be able to hire and promote a more diverse staff, especially women.

Mamie Parker is passionate about diversifying the wildlife biology field due to her own personal experiences as a Black woman. She has collaborated and spoken on various projects such as Safe Spaces Initiatives. Within the Safe Spaces Initiatives project, the National Wildlife Federation started a multi-year campaign named Creating Safe Spaces to hear from advocates about improved and safer outdoor access. In addition, they also partnered with Outdoor Afro, The Links Inc., Patagonia, and Black AF in STEM to bring attention to the challenges Black people encounter when visiting green places safely.



Mamie Parker (left) working with children about wildlife

Citations

1. Parker , Mamie, and David Mizejewski. “Safe Spaces Initiative.” *National Wildlife Federation*, www.nwf.org/Get-Involved/Events/Safe-Spaces.
2. Seymour, Megan. “Dr. Mamie Parker Leads the Way for Women in Conservation.” *The National Wildlife Federation Blog*, 25 Mar. 2021, blog.nwf.org/2021/03/dr-mamie-parker-leads-the-way-for-women-in-conservation/.
3. “M.A. Parker & Associates – Helping Others Keep Going and Growing.” <https://Mamieparker.com>, mamieparker.com.