

The Nature Conservancy

e.o.wilson BIODIVERSITY FOUNDATION

The E.O. Wilson Land Between the Rivers Preserve

The Delta

The Mobile-Tensaw Delta lies within a network of floodplains, rivers, and wetlands extending across the southeastern United States. The region is part of a critical corridor stretching from the Gulf to the Appalachian Mountains. Conserving the capstone "land between the rivers" at the confluence of the Tombigbee and Alabama Rivers is a priority in TNC's ongoing efforts to establish resilient and connected landscapes across the southeastern United States.

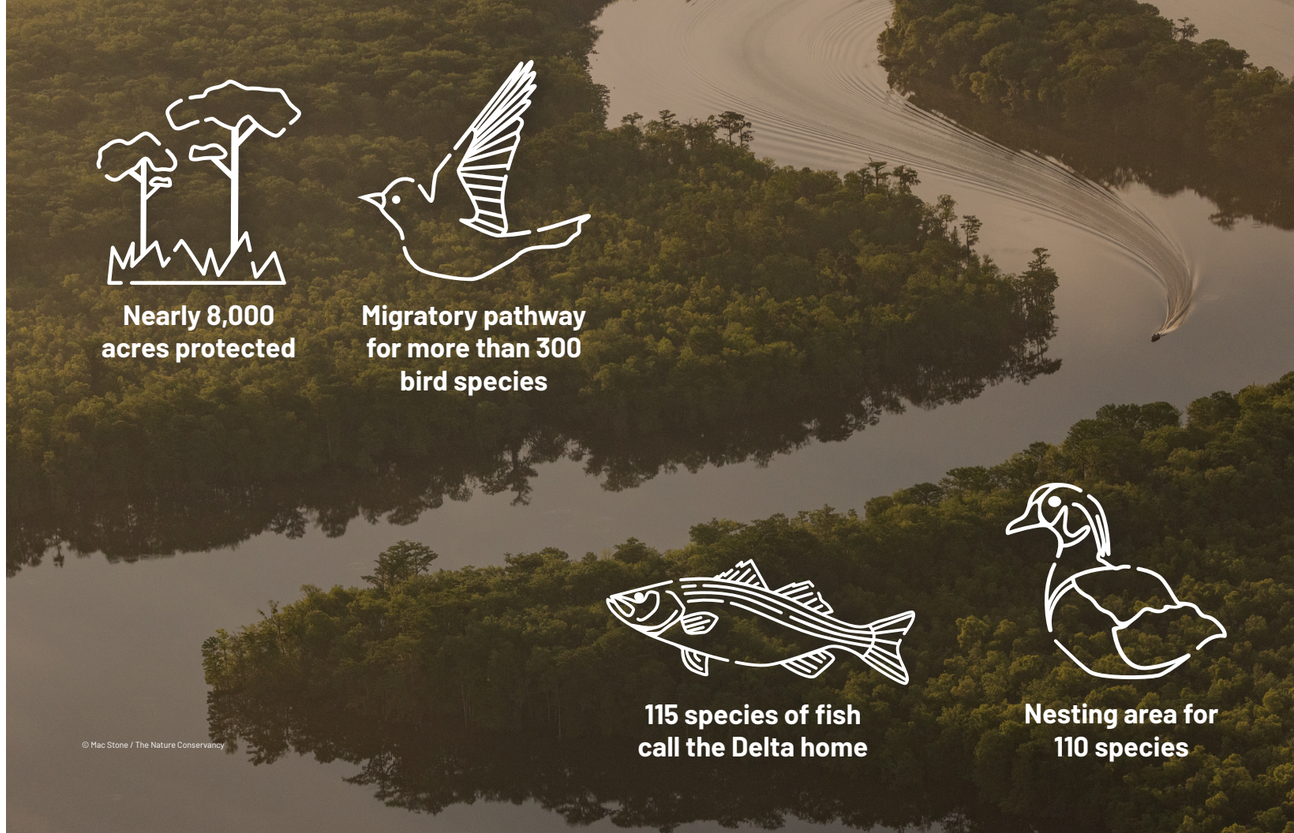
In 2024, The Nature Conservancy, with support from Patagonia's Holdfast Collective, acquired land in what many consider E.O. Wilson's backyard. This vast expanse of bottomland forests is a critical migratory corridor for birds with more than 300 species recorded, including 110 nesting species. The range of 38 amphibian species and 58 reptile species overlap with the Delta.

At least 26 families and 115 species of fish have been reported from the Delta.

The Delta's human communities are also diverse. The region was traditionally the land of the Naniaba, the "people of the forks." The Naniaba's land between the Tombigbee and Alabama rivers long served as an important neutral ground between the Choctaw confederacies and the Creek confederacies.

Today, the Delta region is intertwined with the culture and livelihoods of southern Alabama. The communities that live in this special place are deeply invested in its future—and well aware that long-term conservation is critical to ensuring survival of native species, as well as local and state economies, recreation and community life.





In Partnership

For more than 40 years The Nature Conservancy has worked with partners to protect some 100,000 acres of habitat within the Mobile-Tensaw Delta.

Our donors, and partners like Patagonia's Holdfast Collective and the E.O. Wilson Biodiversity Foundation, have been instrumental in this work.

© Mac Stone / The Nature Conservancy

"We have always believed that it is both possible – and our responsibility - to protect the Delta. It is a belief we shared with Dr. Wilson, who joined The Nature Conservancy as a trustee and helped to guide us through important conservation decisions— including our work in the Delta.

Dr. Wilson's commitment to The Nature Conservancy was crucial to charting our own path forward and putting the Delta at the forefront of our conservation efforts in Alabama. There is perhaps nobody more associated with the Delta than Dr. Wilson. It is a place as unique and iconic as he is, and it is fitting that his name and legacy be forever connected with the place that inspired him on his incredible journey."

Mitch Reid
Director, The Nature Conservancy in Alabama


© Hunter Nichols / The Nature Conservancy

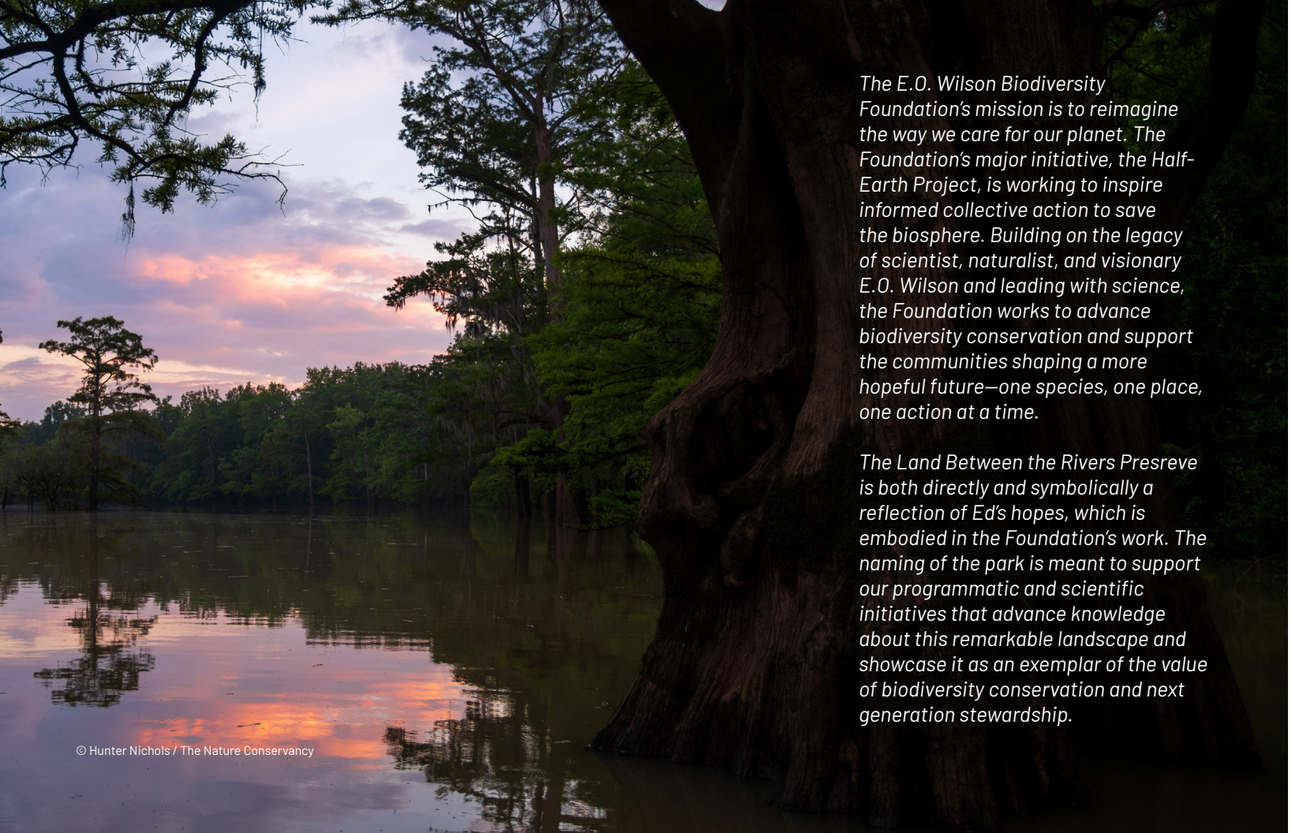
"For E.O. Wilson the wilderness was a place of infinite freedom, rapturous privacy, and solace. When he was 12, he found every opportunity he could to hop on his balloon-tired, single-gear Schwinn bicycle, and ride out to the riverfront of the Mobile-Tensaw Delta. There, he experienced the sheer joy of seeing the flash of the yellow wing of a butterfly he had never seen before -
a prized discovery he could now add to his 'butterfly life list'.

Throughout Ed's life, he recounted his experience in the Delta like a hymnal for how we should all live and come to know the importance of a place and its protection. Ed carried the Delta's exceptional natural richness with him everywhere, and it tugged him back at every opportunity.

This was his sacred place. His great-great-grandmother Mary was born alongside the Delta at the site of an emerging utopian town. His great-grandfather James swam across the Delta to escape the last major battle of the Civil War. He was rooted in the life of the Delta as inextricably as the rest the natural world there. It was home.

The E.O. Wilson Biodiversity Foundation, in partnership with The Nature Conservancy-Alabama, is thrilled to establish the E.O. Wilson Land Between the Rivers Preserve, a place of extraordinary biodiversity, on the northern edge of the Mobile-Tensaw Delta."

Paula J. Ehrlich
President & CEO, E.O. Wilson Biodiversity Foundation



© Hunter Nichols / The Nature Conservancy

The E.O. Wilson Biodiversity Foundation's mission is to reimagine the way we care for our planet. The Foundation's major initiative, the Half-Earth Project, is working to inspire informed collective action to save the biosphere. Building on the legacy of scientist, naturalist, and visionary E.O. Wilson and leading with science, the Foundation works to advance biodiversity conservation and support the communities shaping a more hopeful future—one species, one place, one action at a time.

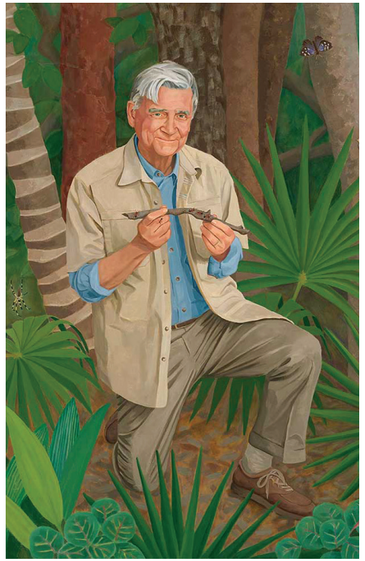
The Land Between the Rivers Presreve is both directly and symbolically a reflection of Ed's hopes, which is embodied in the Foundation's work. The naming of the park is meant to support our programmatic and scientific initiatives that advance knowledge about this remarkable landscape and showcase it as an exemplar of the value of biodiversity conservation and next generation stewardship.

E.O. Wilson

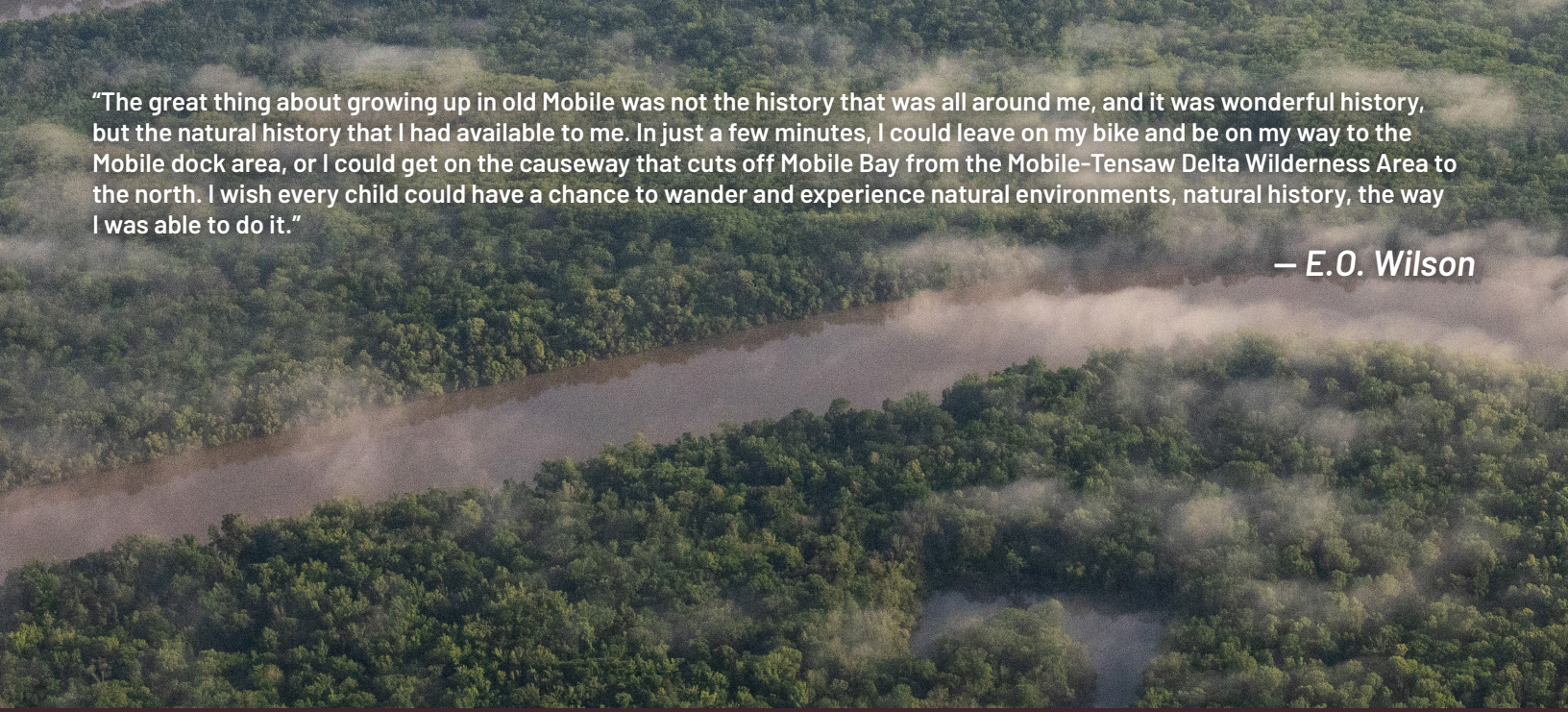
Edward O. Wilson, born June 10, 1929, died December 2021. Dr. Wilson was Honorary Curator in Entomology and University Research Professor Emeritus at Harvard University, Chairman of the E.O. Wilson Biodiversity Foundation Board of Advisors, and Chairman of the Half-Earth Council. He is generally recognized as one of the leading scientists in the world. He is also recognized as one of the foremost naturalists in both science and literature, as well as a synthesizer in works stretching from pure biology across to the social sciences and humanities.

Wilson is acknowledged as the creator of two scientific disciplines (island biogeography and sociobiology), three unifying concepts for science and the humanities jointly (biophilia, biodiversity studies, and consilience), and two major advances in global biodiversity conservation (the Encyclopedia of Life and Half-Earth).

Among more than one hundred awards he has received worldwide are the U.S. National Medal of Science, the Crafoord Prize (equivalent of the Nobel, for ecology) of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, and the International Prize of Biology of Japan; and in letters, two Pulitzer Prizes in non-fiction, the Nonino and Serono Prizes of Italy and COSMOS Prize of Japan. For his work in conservation, he has received the Gold Medal of the Worldwide Fund for Nature and the Audubon Medal of the Audubon Society. His latest lecture, "Ecosystems & the Harmony of Nature," was presented at Half-Earth Day® 2021 in October, 2021. The authorized biography of E.O. Wilson, "SCIENTIST, Edward O. Wilson: A Life in Nature" by Richard Rhodes, was published in November 2021 by Doubleday.



E.O. Wilson on Lignumvitae Key by Jennie Summerall / Oil on canvas, 2006.
© 2006 Jennie Summerall



"The great thing about growing up in old Mobile was not the history that was all around me, and it was wonderful history, but the natural history that I had available to me. In just a few minutes, I could leave on my bike and be on my way to the Mobile dock area, or I could get on the causeway that cuts off Mobile Bay from the Mobile-Tensaw Delta Wilderness Area to the north. I wish every child could have a chance to wander and experience natural environments, natural history, the way I was able to do it."

— E.O. Wilson

© Mac Stone / The Nature Conservancy

To get involved, contact:

The Nature Conservancy

The Nature Conservancy in Alabama
3700 First Avenue North
Birmingham, AL 35222
(205) 251-1155
nature.org/alabama
give.alabama@tnc.org

e.o.wilson BIODIVERSITY FOUNDATION

E.O. Wilson Biodiversity Foundation
300 Blackwell St.
Suite 102
Durham, NC 27701
984.219.2279
info@eowilsonfoundation.org