

EL ACADÉMICO CRISTIÁN SAMPER K., NUEVO PRESIDENTE DE WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY (WCS)

Tras completar diez años como Director del Museo Nacional de Historia Natural del Smithsonian Institution en la ciudad de Washington (U.S.A.), el Dr. Cristián Samper, Miembro Correspondiente de ACCEFYN, ha aceptado el cargo de Presidente del Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), en la ciudad de Nueva York, a partir del 1 de agosto de 2012. Este nuevo reto le permitirá, entre otras cosas, dedicar más tiempo a los temas de ciencia y educación para la conservación.

La Sociedad para la Conservación de la Vida Silvestre (WCS) fue establecida en 1895 como el New York Zoological Society. Es una de las organizaciones no gubernamentales más importantes del mundo, con un equipo de 4000 empleados en 65 países y un presupuesto anual de US \$200 millones. Cuenta con un equipo de más de 200 investigadores de nivel doctoral y apoya el manejo de más de 100 áreas protegidas que abarcan casi un millón de kilómetros cuadrados en todo el mundo. También tiene a su cargo el zoológico del Bronx, los tres zoológicos y el acuario de la ciudad de Nueva York.

Smithsonian Institution News

Jan. 23, 2012

Cristián Samper to Step Down As Director of

Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History

Assumes New Position as Head of Wildlife Conservation Society

Cristián Samper, a biologist and international leader in the field of conservation biology, announced his resignation from the National Museum of Natural History where he has served as director since 2003. Samper was Acting Secretary of the Smithsonian from March 2007 until July 2008, when he returned to the Museum of Natural History. Samper will continue as director through July.

Samper is leaving the Smithsonian to become president and CEO of the Wildlife Conservation Society headquartered in New York City.

"It has been a privilege to serve at the Smithsonian as director of this great museum, with a team of dedicated professionals and act as a steward of the largest natural history collection in the world," said Samper. "As a tropical biologist, I recognize the urgent need to conserve the natural and cultural diversity of this planet. It is my goal to contribute to these vital efforts as head of the Wildlife Conservation Society."

Samper took over as Acting Secretary of the Smithsonian at the request of the Board of Regents when then-Secretary Lawrence Small announced his resignation March 27, 2007. Samper immediately stepped into the position, taking a leave from the directorship of Natural History. In the 15 months he served as Acting Secretary, Samper oversaw a number of governance reforms at the Institution; he reinstated scholarship as the highest priority following several years of emphasis on funding for infrastructure and needed building repairs and maintenance, established a task force to examine the relationship of the business operation—now Smithsonian Enterprises—to the Institution and represented the Smithsonian at several congressional hearings. He also started planning for the first Smithsonian wide capital campaign.

"Cristián is an outstanding leader who leaves a major legacy," said Smithsonian Secretary Wayne Clough. "During his tenure significant portions of the museum were renovated to make way for innovative new permanent exhibitions, and he brought a renewed commitment to research and scholarship. The beneficiaries are the millions of people who visit the museum each year."

At the National Museum of Natural History, Samper was responsible for the direction and strategic planning of the museum, covering work in the areas of biology, geology, paleontology and anthropology. He oversaw an annual federal budget of \$68 million in federal funds in FY 2012 and supervised more than 460 employees. The museum houses 126 million specimens and artifacts—the largest collection at the Smithsonian, and hosts an average of 7 million visitors a year. Its scientists publish about 500 scientific research contributions a year. Samper's accomplishments include:

- Renovations of major exhibitions in the museum, including the Behring Family Hall of Mammals (2003), the Butterfly Pavilion (2007), the Sant Ocean Hall (2008) and the David H. Koch Hall of Human Origins (2010)

- Upgrading of collections storage facilities, including a \$100 million expansion and renovation of the Museum Support Center, a state-of-the-art collections facility, and expanded digitization of collections
- Developed new digital outreach efforts
- Development of a succession plan for research scientists, including a major recruitment of the next generation of scientists across the museum
- Established the Buck Fellowship Program to train the next generation of scientists
- Raised more than \$150 million in gifts for strategic priorities
- Served as co-founder of the Encyclopedia of Life, a Web-based global partnership to provide online access to knowledge about life on Earth

"It has been an immense pleasure to work with Cristián as both director of the National Museum of Natural History and Acting Secretary of the Smithsonian," said Roger Sant, a Smithsonian Regent and Vice Chair of the museum's Advisory Board. "He is a transformational leader who has been as comfortable dealing with big ideas as he has with the day-to-day details of the Institution. All of us are grateful to Cristián for a decade of extraordinary service."

Before coming to Washington, Samper was deputy director and staff scientist at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute in Panama from 2001 to 2003. A native of Colombia, Samper served as director of the environment division of the Foundation for Higher Education in Colombia in the early 1990s and was the moving force behind establishing a network of private reserves in that country. Samper earned his master's degree and doctorate in biology at Harvard University.

Samper will begin at the Wildlife Conservation Society Aug. 1. The Wildlife Conservation Society is dedicated to saving wildlife and wild places around the world. The 117-year-old organization runs the world's largest system of urban wildlife parks, including the Bronx Zoo, New York Aquarium, Central Park Zoo, Prospect Park Zoo and the Queens Zoo. In addition, WCS oversees more than 500 conservation projects around the world. WCS is headquartered at the Bronx Zoo in New York City. Samper will follow president and CEO Steven Sanderson who retires from WCS in July.



****NEWS RELEASE****

CONTACT: MARY DIXON: (1-347-840-1242; mdixon@wcs.org)

Wildlife Conservation Society Appoints New President and CEO

Dr. Cristián Samper, Director of the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History, to Lead WCS Starting August 1, 2012. Dr. Samper follows Dr. Steven E. Sanderson who retires after a decade of renewing WCS parks, expanding global conservation efforts, and successful financial planning

Bronx, New York (January 23, 2012) – The Wildlife Conservation Society announced today that Dr. Cristián Samper, Director of the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History, has been named its President and CEO, effective August 1, 2012. He will serve through July, 2012 at the Smithsonian.

Dr. Samper, a scientist and an international authority on conservation biology and environmental policy, will follow Dr. Steven E. Sanderson who announced his retirement as WCS President and CEO, effective July 2012.

During his tenure, Dr. Sanderson, who has led WCS since 2001, has overseen the expansion of its global conservation programs into more than 65 nations, the renaissance of the Bronx Zoo, the launch of the re-birth of the New York Aquarium, a successful \$650 million capital campaign, and the alignment of WCS parks and global programs to create an unmatched force protecting nature and our planet. Under Dr. Sanderson's leadership, WCS has modernized governance and experienced 10 years of fiscal balance.

"On behalf of the WCS Board of Trustees, I want to welcome Cristián to WCS, which has grown under Steve's leadership to be the world's preeminent science-based conservation organization," said Ward W. Woods, Chair of the WCS Board. "Cristian's strong background in conservation biology, sound management, and fundraising make him a perfect fit to lead WCS well into the future."

"Since 2003, Cristián has run the largest natural history collection in the world and a museum that welcomes more than 7 million visitors a year. His background fits perfectly with WCS, where one of our most important assets is the power of our four zoos and aquarium combined with our conservation field work around the globe and in all the world's oceans. Cristián has a solid track record connecting an institution's science with its visitors."

Said Dr. Samper: "I welcome this opportunity to work with a New York City cultural organization that has grown during the past 117 years into one of the most effective conservation efforts in the world. It will be an honor to succeed Steve Sanderson and to work with the dedicated and creative individuals in WCS parks and global conservation program. WCS has a unique position to save wildlife and wild places by harnessing the power of its parks and field programs. No other organization has the curatorial, husbandry, education, science, and health talents of the worldwide WCS team."

"I am deeply appreciative of the opportunity to have served the Smithsonian Institution as Director of the National Museum of Natural History. I will bring many of the rich experiences and lessons learned there and throughout my career as a biologist to WCS."

As Director of the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History, Dr. Samper ran the largest natural history collection in the world, with more than 126 million specimens and artifacts. During his tenure at the Smithsonian, Dr. Samper reinvigorated the research staff by hiring new curators to replace retiring staff; established an endowed fellowship program; built major new collections, storage facilities, and laboratories; and raised more than \$150 million to support new long-term exhibitions and programs, including the Encyclopedia of Life and the Sant Ocean Hall.

Dr. Samper served as Acting Secretary of the Smithsonian from March 2007 through June 2008. He worked with the Board of Regents on comprehensive governance review and reform, secured funding from Congress to address the funding needs for facilities, and initiated the planning for the Institution's first national fundraising campaign.

Prior to working in Washington, D.C., from 2001 to 2003, he was deputy director and staff scientist at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute in Panama, the world's largest research facility for tropical biology. From 1999 to 2001, he served as chairman of the Subsidiary of Scientific, Technical, and Technological Advice of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity. In this role, he helped develop a global strategy for plant conservation and launched the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, designed to determine the consequences of ecosystem change for human well-being and provide a scientific basis for action to conserve and use ecosystems sustainably. He has served as Vice-Chair of the IUCN Species Survival Commission and a member of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel of the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

From 1995 to 2001, Dr. Samper was the founding director of the Alexander von Humboldt Institute, the national biodiversity research institute of Colombia. He was responsible for developing the National Biodiversity Policy for Colombia and served as chief science adviser for biodiversity for the Colombian government. He served as director of the environment division of the Foundation for Higher Education in Colombia (1992 to 1995) and was a moving force behind the establishment of a network of private nature reserves and major environmental education programs throughout Colombia. For his contributions, he was awarded the National Medal of the Environment by the president of Colombia in 2001.

Known for his contributions to our understanding of the ecology of the Andean cloud forests, conservation biology and environmental policy, Dr. Samper is currently a member of the boards of the Nature Conservancy, World Wildlife Fund, American Association of Museums, and the Encyclopedia of Life Executive Committee. He is also a member of Harvard University's Board of Overseers and Biodiversity International's Board of Trustees.

Born in San José, Costa Rica and raised in Colombia, Dr. Samper studied biology at the Universidad de Los Andes in Bogotá and earned his master's and doctorate degrees in biology from Harvard University, where he was awarded the Derek Bok prize for excellence in teaching.

The Wildlife Conservation Society saves wildlife and wild places worldwide. We do so through science, global conservation, education and the management of the world's largest system of urban wildlife parks, led by the flagship Bronx Zoo. Together these activities change attitudes towards nature and help people imagine wildlife and humans living in harmony. WCS is committed to this mission because it is essential to the integrity of life on Earth. Visit www.wcs.org.

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Special Note to the Media: If you would like to guide your readers or viewers to a Web link where they can make donations in support of helping save wildlife and wild places, please direct them to wcs.org.

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