

IPN Promotes Regenerative Tourism in

# La Malinche

## National Park

With the participation of the Escuela Superior de Turismo, the Matlalcuéyatl Environmental Culture Promotion Center has established an educational communication museum to raise environmental awareness among the population of Zitlaltepec, Tlaxcala, and surrounding areas.



**ADDA AVENDAÑO**

**D**rought, forest fires, overgrazing, pests, and illegal logging threaten La Malinche National Park- also known as Matlalcuéyatl—a key part of the Neo-Volcanic Mountain Range in the Mexico City Metropolitan Area and home to the fifth-highest mountain in the country.

Despite its designation as a national park in October 1938, and access restrictions issued by the National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (Conanp), the region continues to suffer due to limited environmental awareness.

In response, the Instituto Politécnico Nacional (IPN), through its Escuela Superior de Turismo (EST) and the institutional Environmental Network (Rema), represented by Dr. Fernando Mohedano López, has joined efforts with institutions such as the Universidad Autónoma de Morelos to support the ecological tourism group Turismo Ecológico Matlalcuéyatl, which has worked for more than 15 years to protect the ecosystem.

Dr. Mohedano, a professor and researcher at the EST, explained that the IPN supports the development of the Matlalcuéyatl Environmental Culture Promotion Center—part of the Red de Museos Ecológicos de México y Centroamérica (Network of Ecological Museums of Mexico and Central America). This initiative is registered in the project database of the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN-MX).

The Matlalcuéyatl Center for the Promotion of Environmental Culture, he added, is a museum entity for educational communication that disseminates environmental culture to encourage ecological awareness in the population of Zitlaltepec, Tlaxcala, and its surroundings, with the aim of restoring and conserving its ecosystems and species.

“We also look to reduce the environmental pressure factors in their territory, in addition to healing, using and caring for their natural resources through sustainable and regenerative tourism and social eco-entrepreneurship, as an economic base that allows for long-term ecological recovery,” he said. He emphasized that the Politécnico, through the representation of the Escuela Superior de Turismo, provides support through courses, field visits, advice on organization,



**In October 2024 the community of Zitlaltepec, Tlaxcala, received support from CONANP to build the first stage of the Matlalcuéyatl Center for the Promotion of Environmental Culture, which was inaugurated on February 21, 2025, with the aim of creating a solid foundation to disseminate and promote environmental culture in the region.**



*Interior of the Matlalcuéyatl Center for the Promotion of Environmental Culture.*



*Matlalcuéyatl Environmental Culture Promotion Center (Aerial photo courtesy of Matlalcuéyatl Community Group).*

governance, and proposals for sustainable regenerative activities, as well as specialized training in environmental education to the Matlalcuéyatl community group.

#### EDUCATION IS KEY

As a specialist in Natural Environment Conservation and Restoration, Dr. Mohedano emphasized that environmental education is a powerful tool in facing climate change. It provides individuals with the knowledge, values, and skills needed to improve adaptive capacity.

He highlighted that when communities adopt educational programs, they integrate local knowledge and develop unique learning strategies, guiding visitors to better understand environmental challenges and propose innovative solutions.

Environmental sustainability is a priority in IPN's academic programs. The Bachelor's in Tourism and the Master's in Tourism Administration and Innovation include subjects such as Tourism and Env-

ronment and feature a research line in Sustainability, Society, and Tourism, all aligned with the principles of environmental education and alternative tourism trends.

The Matlalcuéyatl Center is a prime example: its construction avoided prefabricated or concrete materials, opting instead for straw, wood, and recycled plastic tiles (plastiteja) to preserve the natural harmony. In future stages, the center will also be coated with clay.

#### ECOLOGICAL MUSEUMS

He also holds a master's degree in Business Economics and informed that the Ecological Museums of the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network, which will be developed in strategic conservation sites in the Mexican-National-Central American region, seek to promote ecological regeneration in populations with natural areas.

According to Mohedano López, who together with the Matlalcuéyatl

Community Group, represented by Eduardo Molina Mendoza, has actively collaborated in the project "Ecological Museums and Sustainable Tourism: educational spaces to promote the restoration of biodiversity with sustainable economies", ecological regeneration is possible with the active participation of the community, through awareness and social eco-entrepreneurship.

He explained that regenerative tourism is based on social, economic, cultural, and ecological sustainability. This model adapts to local characteristics and promotes shared responsibility among all stakeholders—tourists, local communities, tour operators, public and private institutions, and NGOs.

Dr. Mohedano noted that regenerative tourism is gaining global attention. Between 2023 and 2024, over 100 indexed academic articles were published on the subject. Its significance lies in actively involving visitors in actions that strengthen socio-environmental systems and contribute to ecological restoration.