

# The Secretariat of Agriculture assists in the rescue of the La Malinche National Park



During the last quarter of the year, the National Agro-alimentary Health, Safety and Quality service (Senasica) has collaborated with the National Forestry Commission (Conafor) in the eradication of the smaller Mexican pine beetle from 520 forest hectares.

The Secretariat of Agriculture and Rural Development collaborates with the Secretariat of the Environment and Natural Resources and the government of Tlaxcala to rescue the trees of La Malinche National Park, which have been harmed by the smaller Mexican pine beetle (*Detroctonus mexicanus* Hopkins).

The Conafor reports that the pest has been detected in 645 hectares of the ecosystem; accordingly, the Mexican government agencies have designed a comprehensive plan to implement control and eradication phytosanitary actions in 520 hectares during the last quarter of 2021.

On behalf of the Secretary of Agriculture, Víctor Villalobos Arámbula, Francisco Javier Trujillo Arriaga, general director of the National Agro-alimentary Health, Safety and Quality Service (Senasica), attended a meeting at the Government House of Tlaxcala to brief about the strategy that will start operations as of the first day of October.

The director explained that the Senasica and the Conafor will organize 16 sanitary brigades of 6 members each, which will be managed by four phytosanitary technicians with experience in the fight against this type of forest pest.

The brigade members will be selected from citizens of the communities near the national park in order to exploit their knowledge about the natural area.

The smaller Mexican pine beetle control and eradication plan includes the use of biological inputs (previously authorized by the environmental authorities) that are harmless for the plants and animals of this ecosystem.

Abel Plascencia González, manager of sanity services of the Conafor, explained that the combination of the efforts of the environmental authority and the federal sanitary agency guarantee that the pest will be abated by more than 80% in a three-month window.

Further, he mentioned that the technicians and operations personnel of the brigades will inspect the areas where the presence of the pest has not been reported in order to fight any new outbreaks detected during the sanitation operations.

From 2020 to date, the Conafor has organized six training courses about wood-boring insects to standardize the technical knowledge across the communities that participate in the conservation of the park.

On behalf of governess Lorena Cuéllar Cisneros, Sergio González Hernández, Secretary of Government of the state, emphasized that rescuing this ecosystem, iconic for the people of Tlaxcala, is a priority of their recently inaugurated administration (August 31).

Luis Antonio Ramírez, Secretary of the Environment of the state, pointed out that the agency is operating a reforestation program in the affected areas of the ecosystem, where 15,150 *Pinus montezumae* and 7,725 *Pinus pseudostrobus* trees will be seeded during the first stage.

Also in attendance at the meeting: Octavio Carranza de Mendoza, representative of the OIRSA (International Regional Organization for Safety in Agriculture and Livestock) in Mexico, José Manuel Gutiérrez Ruelas, Senasica's director of phytosanitary protection, and representatives of the National Commission of Protected Natural Areas (Conanp) and the Mexican Federal Environmental Protection Agency (Profepa).

The Senasica maintains a close collaboration with the Conafor in forest pest management issues. Their most recent collaboration consisted in the management and eradication of the pine defoliating webworm in 14 municipalities of the northern region in the state of Oaxaca in 2019.