

## **Think Blue. Nature. – Nature and Species Conservation in Mexico**

### **For Volkswagen, Environmental Protection Doesn't Stop at the Factory Gates**

Volkswagen de México has long been a champion of nature and species conservation, and the "Think Blue. Nature." project is a major new addition to its portfolio. In collaboration with the German international development agency GIZ and the Mexican Environment Ministry, the project was launched in 2014, offering a framework for a wide range of activities, from reforestation, to biodiversity conservation, to environmental training for young people. This will complement existing long-term projects in Mexico aimed at promoting environmental sustainability in the government-funded biodiversity corridor in the Sierra Madre mountain range.

### **Training Environmental Ambassadors**

The new three-year "Eco Chavos" program trains young people to become environmental ambassadors, so that they can raise awareness of species diversity and the environment, and inspire 10,000 young people in their local communities to get involved. Conservation activities will take place in one of seven nature conservation areas in the CESMO (Corredor Ecologico Sierra Madre Oriental) biodiversity corridor in the eastern Sierra Madre mountain range. The biodiversity corridor, covering some four million hectares and spanning five Mexican states, is home to around 650 endangered species. CESMO is Mexico's contribution to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, and the commitments undertaken include planting 100,000 trees and cleaning up 100 kilometers of river.

One year into the project, by April 2015 there were already some 618 young environmental ambassadors actively working in 21 groups, with 17 eco-projects up and running in their home regions.

### **Reforestation in the National Park**

The large-scale reforestation of the National Park between the Iztaccíhuatl and Popocatepetl volcanoes is another element of "Think Blue. Nature". Forty of our suppliers have now joined the project, which has planted 490,000 alpine conifers in the last 6 years to help stabilize groundwater levels in the Puebla region. Improving the infiltration of rainwater has increased the annual available water supply by up to four million cubic meters. In a similar project, 158,000 native trees are being planted in Sierra de Lobos, Guanajuato.

### **Researching and Promoting Biodiversity**

The "Por Amor al Planeta" (For Love of the Planet) program, launched in 2007, promotes scientific biodiversity research and species conservation projects in Mexico. In April 2015, the ninth "Por Amor al Planeta" prize, valued at around €30,000, was presented to Dr. Alfonso Aguirre, an oceanologist at the University of Baja California, in recognition of his conservation work with native flora and fauna on Mexico's Pacific islands.