

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Butterfly Pavilion and Government of Mexico Celebrate Landmark Monarch Habitat Restoration

#### 100,000 Native Oyamel Fir Trees Planted in the Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve

**WESTMINSTER, Colo. (October 23, 2025)** — Butterfly Pavilion, in collaboration with the Government of Mexico and local community partners, has completed a historic reforestation project to restore the wintering habitat of the migratory Monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*). Between July and September 2025, 100,000 native Oyamel fir trees (*Abies religiosa*) were planted across 32 reforestation sites in Mexico's Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve to create vital winter refuges and help secure the future of this extraordinary migration.

"Completing this reforestation marks a historic milestone for Monarch conservation," said Shiran Hershcovich, Lepidopterist Senior Manager at Butterfly Pavilion. "This large-scale restoration has united communities, scientists, and governments across borders to protect one of nature's most extraordinary migrations. Every tree planted represents a promise to the Monarchs and to future generations."

The Monarch's 3,000-mile migration from Canada and the northern United States to central Mexico is one of the most remarkable journeys in the natural world, but it is under grave threat. Populations have declined by nearly 80 percent in just 30 years due to habitat loss, deforestation, and climate change. Mexico's Oyamel fir forests, which shelter millions of butterflies each winter, now cover less than 5 percent of their original range. In recent winters, colonies occupied only 0.9 hectares, the second-lowest area on record, while scientists estimate at least six hectares are needed to sustain the species.

The project, titled *Preservation of Critical Overwintering Habitat for the Migratory Monarch Butterfly in Central Mexico*, was made possible through a *start-up* grant from the Association of Zoos and Aquariums Conservation Grant Fund and additional foundation and individual supporters and implemented through collaboration with the Consulate General of Mexico in Denver, the Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation (Agencia Mexicana de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo), the Secretariat of Environment and Natural Resources (Secretaría de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales), and the National Commission of Protected Natural Areas (Comisión Nacional de Áreas Naturales Protegidas) and the essential work of the surrounding communities.

Working alongside project partners and Alternare, a local conservation nonprofit, and community landholders from six ejidos (El Rosario, Cerro Prieto, Los Remedios, El Calabozo Segunda Fracción, Santa Ana, and Jesús de Nazareno), restoration teams identified, prepared, and replanted degraded forest areas within the Sierra El Campanario and Sierra Chincua sanctuaries. The effort was supported by the Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve

Directorate and the Michoacán Forestry Commission (Comisión Forestal del Estado de Michoacán), which provided seedlings from three regional nurseries.

Beyond forest restoration, the initiative also created 20 native pollinator gardens in schools within the Reserve's buffer zone. These living classrooms will engage students and families in pollinator conservation and inspire the next generation of environmental stewards.

"Standing in these restored forests today, it's clear that our collective efforts matter," said Hershcovich. "Each Oyamel fir we planted strengthens the delicate chain that keeps the Monarch migration alive. This work gives hope that with continued collaboration, this remarkable journey will endure."

Monarch butterflies are essential pollinators that sustain ecosystems across North America and serve as indicators of environmental health. This project reflects Butterfly Pavilion's leadership in global invertebrate conservation and its active role in the Association of Zoos and Aquariums Saving Animals From Extinction (SAFE) program, a continent-wide effort to protect Monarchs from Canada to Mexico.

Butterfly Pavilion will continue working with Mexican and U.S. partners to monitor tree growth, restore additional habitat, and expand education and community engagement programs that safeguard the migration for generations to come.

To learn more about how you can help protect Monarch butterflies and support this vital work, visit [butterflies.org/monarch-butterfly-biosphere-reserve](https://butterflies.org/monarch-butterfly-biosphere-reserve).

### **About Butterfly Pavilion**

Celebrating its 30th anniversary in 2025, Butterfly Pavilion is the world's first Association of Zoos and Aquariums-accredited, stand-alone invertebrate zoo, located in Westminster, Colorado. Its mission is to foster an appreciation of invertebrates by educating the public, protecting threatened habitats, and advancing global conservation research. Butterfly Pavilion's scientists are leading invertebrate conservation initiatives across the globe, from Mongolia and Tanzania to Turks and Caicos and Sumatra, Indonesia. Learn more at [www.butterflies.org](https://www.butterflies.org)

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