

# SOUL OF MEXICO TOURS

## DR. PABLO JARAMILLO LOPEZ BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Pablo Jaramillo Lopez is originally from Ecuador and has spent significant time in the three countries that host the monarch butterfly migration. Pablo studied English in the US in his youth, completed his doctorate in Canada, and now lives in Mexico with his Mexican wife and children. His multicultural background and lifelong passion for soil science give him a unique perspective on monarch butterfly biology and conservation. To understand the migration, we need more complete information about their relationship with the forests where they overwinter. And if we are to safeguard the health of the butterfly forest, local people must play a major role in its preservation.

Pablo studied agriculture in Ecuador before completing his doctorate in biology at the University of Western Ontario in Canada. His dissertation research focused on reusing human byproducts (organic residues) to create a soil amendment to improve soil conditions for agricultural and forestry applications. In Ontario, Dr. Jeremy McNeil introduced Pablo to the incredible monarch butterfly migration that originates there. Dr. McNeil encouraged Pablo to apply for a postdoctoral fellowship at the National Autonomous University of Mexico. Pablo's postdoc led him to his current position in the department of agroecology at the Research Institute for Ecosystems and Sustainability at the National Autonomous University of Mexico in Morelia.

For several reasons Pablo's postdoctoral project was a turning point in his life. The project focused on improving the soil ecosystem for more efficient

reforestation practices in the Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve. In the process, Pablo collaborated with an indigenous community that lives inside the Reserve. Through the project, 94% seedling survival rates were achieved, and the forest ecosystem was restored in just four years. Pablo learned that collaborating with local communities and promoting their wellbeing is the only way to effectively conserve the forest ecosystem that monarchs choose as their overwintering grounds. This project earned Pablo the 2014 Pollinator Advocate Award which has encouraged to continue finding ways to conserve the forests that host monarch butterflies during the winter.

Visiting the monarch butterfly overwintering colonies with Pablo promises to be a wonderful experience not only focused on learning more about these incredible insects but also to see how all of us can help conserve and protect these iconic winged creatures.