

Island Council of Tenerife, Santa Cruz City Council, and Fundación Cepsa promote ecological recovery of Las Mesas Park

- **A study will be carried out for the area's ecological restoration, and a thermophilic forest and traditional fruit trees will be planted**

The Island Council of Tenerife, through the Natural Environment, Sustainability, and Safety and Emergencies area, the Santa Cruz de Tenerife City Council, and Fundación Cepsa are launching a project for the ecological restoration of Las Mesas Park, located in the capital. Rosa Dávila, president of the Island Council of Tenerife, José Manuel Bermúdez, mayor of the municipality, and Belén Machado, head of Fundación Cepsa, visited the space today, in an event also attended by Blanca Pérez, councilor for Natural Environment, Sustainability, and Safety and Emergencies; Pedro Millán, island director of Natural Environment; and Carlos Tarife, first deputy mayor and head of Public Services, Environment, and European Projects; while Alberto de la Rosa attended on behalf of the Wolfredo Wildpret Botanical Garden Scientific and Cultural Chair.

Rosa Dávila thanked Fundación Cepsa for its collaboration on the project to restore Las Mesas Park, "an important space for the metropolitan area. A technical study will be completed to undertake the ecological restoration work, with the acquisition of plants to restore this space. This action is part of the Island Council's ecological corridors program, which is working to eliminate invasive plants and repopulate the area with native plants." The president also highlighted the important support of the General Foundation of the University of La Laguna, through the aforementioned chair, to carry out the project.

Meanwhile, Belén Machado explained that "at Fundación Cepsa, we're very satisfied with this public-private collaboration. This joint project involves the Island Council of Tenerife, the Santa Cruz City Council, and our own foundation, and it will also have the University of La Laguna as a key participant. It's a project that will imminently involve a detailed geological, botanical, and bioclimatic study to identify potential vegetation for this environment, for which we'll have the vital collaboration of the research staff of the Wolfredo Wilprett Botanical Garden Chair."

"In the short to medium term, ecological restoration based on a thermophilic forest and the planting of traditional fruit trees will be carried out. All of this will also involve citizen participation, with ecological volunteering activities, citizen science actions, and of course, environmental education and awareness activities," according to Machado.

This action "unites Fundación Cepsa's interest in protecting and recovering biodiversity, and we want to help turn Las Mesas into a green corridor, from the Anaga Biosphere Reserve to the urban green spaces of Santa Cruz de Tenerife, by bringing native species to natural and urban ecosystems," she explained.

"We have been collaborating for years in this area of Las Mesas Park with the Sustainable Santa Cruz Foundation on reforestation activities and environmental volunteering. Now we are also creating a nature classroom and an ecological visitor center with the goal of contributing to the environment and society in general," added the head of Fundación Cepsa

in the Canary Islands.

Meanwhile, José Manuel Bermúdez explained that “this is another example of collaboration between the Island Council of Tenerife, the City Council of Santa Cruz, and Fundación Cepsa. Las Mesas Park is only a few minutes away from the city, and it feels like being in the middle of nature. Therefore, its conservation is very important to us. This project will allow us to continue this work so that citizens can enjoy it.”

Las Mesas Park, which spans 168.2 hectares, is an area on the outskirts of the city. Its location, very close to the metropolitan area, but outside protected natural areas, gives it great strategic value as an ecological corridor and place for recreational, sports, and leisure activities. In addition to the technical study, which will determine the best way to undertake the restoration work, including management of the space and zoning as well as the catalog of species to be planted, a series of plants and trees will be acquired as a part of this project. They will provide quality plant material for the park's initial and short-term repopulation, considering its location on the outskirts of the city, as well as experience for future projects requiring the production and acquisition of plant material.

This collaboration framework is aligned with the 2nd Action Plan for the Anaga Massif Biosphere Reserve 2022–2026, which includes several lines of action. Among them are projects for the ecological restoration of key habitats and ecosystems in a poor state of conservation (Line CPN04), projects and actions aimed at implementing the Network of Ecological Corridors of Tenerife (Line CPN05), maintenance and improvement of the system to combat invasive species (land-based) (CPN02), and information campaigns for citizens on “Best Practices in the Biosphere Reserve” (ACD05).

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