



**PROJECT REPORT**  
**MACHU PICCHU SANCTUARY VOLUNTEER TRIP**  
June 8 – 17, 2016



June 2016 ConservationVIP Volunteers

**Executive Summary**

Conservation Volunteers International Program (ConservationVIP) organized and led a volunteer trip to the Historical Sanctuary of Machu Picchu in June 2016, in collaboration with Peru's Ministry of Culture, and the Ministry of Environment (National Service for Protected Area Management, SERNANP). The project was authorized by economist Daniel Maravi Vegacenteno, Regional Director, Ministry of Culture-Cusco, and by engineer José Carlos Nieto Navarrete, Director of the Historical Sanctuary of Machu Picchu for SERNANP. The projects were discussed with anthropologist Dr. Fernando Astete Victoria, Director of the Historical Sanctuary of Machu Picchu.

Nineteen volunteers, including the two trip leaders, John Hollinrake and Barbara Kennedy, ConservationVIP Board Members, along with local guide Santiago Carrasco Bellota, performed 320 hours of volunteer work related to the following projects:

1. Volunteers removed lichen and plants from approximately 3,200 square feet (300 square meters) of rock walls, windows, niches, steps, altar, fountains and water channels within the Chachabamba archaeological site at Km. 104, under the direct supervision of the Ministry of Culture staff. This work was performed on June 12 and 13, 2016.
2. Volunteers prepared a new nursery bed by loosening the soil and removing large stones in the Native Plant Nursery operated by SERNANP adjacent to the Chachabamba ruins. They removed weeds around young trees in a 160,000 square feet (15,000 square meters) plantation near Chachabamba. This work was performed on June 13, 2016.
3. On June 14, 2016 Volunteers cleared 4,260 square feet (396 square meters) of walkways and 4,875 square feet (453 square meters) of planting beds of leaves and debris, and removed strangling invasive vines from the trees along the entrance roadway in the Botanical Garden next to the Manuel Chavez Ballon Museum at Machu Picchu.

During the trip, ConservationVIP donated equipment to help with the management and protection of Machupicchu Sanctuary:

1. To Miguel Zamora Salas, Coordinador de Gestión of Parque Arqueológico Natural Machupicchu, Ministry of Culture, the group donated one dynamic 60 meter x 10.2 mm climbing rope, a locking carabiner, one Black Diamond Super 8 and one Black Diamond Climbing Harness.
2. The group also donated to Miguel Zamora Salas 40 pair of safety sunglasses. These safety glasses will be distributed to the park rangers who work at Machu Picchu, to help protect their eyes from sun damage which can occur at high elevation
3. To Jose Carlos Niete Navarrete, Jefe Del Santuario Historico de Machupicchu, SERNANP, one dynamic 60 meter x 10.2 mm climbing rope, a locking carabiner, one Black Diamond Super 8 and one Black Diamond Climbing Harness.
4. In addition, volunteers donated approximately U.S. \$120 in used equipment including safety goggles, knee pads, and gloves.

Discussions were conducted with SERNANP and Ministry of Culture staff regarding the volunteers' activities, and future projects. Trip leaders will provide this report to economista Daniel Maravi Vegacenteno, Regional Director, Ministry of Culture-Cusco, to engineer José Carlos Nieto Navarrete, Director of the Historical Sanctuary of Machu Picchu for SERNANP, to Administrator of the Machu Picchu Sanctuary, Miguel Zamora Salas, and to Anthropologist Dr. Fernando Astete, Archaeologist for the Machu Picchu Sanctuary.

### **Detailed Trip Report**

Prior to the arrival of the volunteers, the trip leaders and local guide Santiago Carrasco Bellota visited the SERNANP offices in Cusco and presented the staff climbing gear.

Volunteers met the Trip Leaders and Guide Santiago Carrasco Bellota in Cusco on the afternoon of June 8, and spent the next one and one-half days acclimatizing and learning about the complex and storied culture of Peru. They visited several important sites including the Machu Picchu Museum and Sacsayhuaman.

On June 10, 2016, volunteers traveled from Cusco by bus to Ollantaytambo, then by train to Machu Picchu Pueblo (Aguas Calientes). On the way, they stopped at the indigenous Andean village of Chinchero. There they toured a small cathedral, Inka terraces and village remains, a Waka (Inka shrine), and experienced a short section of the Inka Trail. They visited a weaving cooperative, and learned about traditional Inca weaving techniques, and experienced a traditional Peruvian lunch, before heading to Ollantaytambo to catch the train to Aguas Calientes.

Volunteers visited the Machu Picchu Sacred City on June 11, 2016. During the visit, the volunteers received extensive lectures by local guide Santiago Carrasco Bellota about the Inca culture, and preservation issues related to increased visitation as they toured the Sacred City. The volunteers also visited the Inka Bridge and Huayna Picchu before returning that evening to Aguas Calientes.

### **Chachabamba Archaeological Site Volunteer Project Description**

On June 12, 2016, the volunteers traveled at 0800 hrs. by Inka Rail from Machu Picchu Pueblo to Km 104. The Ministry of Culture had authorized ConservationVIP's volunteers to assist in removal of lichen and plant material from the walls, pillars, windows, niches, and fountains of the Inka site at Chachabamba.

Upon arrival at Chachabamba, the volunteers received an orientation from Ministry of Culture and SERNANP staff. It was decided that the volunteers would work one and one half days with Ministry of Culture staff at the Chachabamba archaeological site, and one half day with SERNANP staff at the native plant nursery and a nearby plantation. Volunteers began cleaning the stone walls, stairs, water channels and fountains at the Chachabamba archaeological site under the direction of Ministry of Culture staff and ConservationVIP trip leaders. Using only nylon brushes and wooden sticks, the volunteers began removing vegetation, lichen, and invasive plant species.

Some of the volunteers worked on the altar, stairways, and walls, while the rest cleaned the waterways and the eight fountains on the east side of Chachabamba. After the fountains and water courses were cleaned, Ministry of Culture staff poured some water into the channels leading to the fountains, so volunteers could enjoy seeing the fountains function once again.

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Chachabamba Fountains, before and after cleaning

This work continued until 1700 hrs., at which time the volunteers prepared to leave to take the train back to Machu Picchu Pueblo

On June 13, 2016 the volunteers traveled at 0800 hrs. by Inka Rail from Machu Picchu Pueblo to Km104. Most of the volunteers spent half a day clearing unwanted vegetation from around the bases of young trees in a one and one-half hectare plantation near the Native Plant Nursery under the direction of SERNANP. A few volunteers helped the SERNANP Native Plant Nursery manager dig a new shaded planting bed, including removing many large boulders from the soil.



Removing weeds in Plantation



Building Nursery Bed

After lunch the Volunteers returned to Chachabamba and began cleaning the stone walls, water courses and fountains on the west side of the site, under the supervision of the Ministry of Culture staff and ConservationVIP trip leaders. Using only nylon brushes and wooden sticks, the volunteers removed vegetation, lichen, and invasive plant species.

In total, during the two days, volunteers cleaned building walls, cleaned sixteen fountains on the east and west side of the site, cleared the water channels running through the site to the fountains, cleaned the area around the altar, and the stairway adjacent to the altar. The area totaled approximately 3,200 square feet (300 square meters).

## Botanical Garden

With the approval of biólogo Julio Ochoa of the Ministry of Culture, on June 14, the volunteers worked in the Botanical Garden next to the Manuel Chavez Ballon Museum at Machu Picchu. Volunteers performed a variety of tasks, including removing plants which were growing on an estimated 4,558 square feet (424 square meters) of terrace walls and cleaned 48 flying steps connecting the different terraces in the garden. The group in total removed dead vegetation and invasive plants from an estimated 4,875 square feet (453 square meters) of planted garden area, and cleaned an estimated 4,260 square feet (396 square meters) of walkways in the garden. Volunteers also removed a strangling invasive vine from the trees along the roadway leading to the museum entrance.



Removing unwanted plants from the Botanical Garden, Machupicchu



That evening, the volunteers joined Mr. Miguel Zamora and many of his staff at the Ministry of Culture offices for a ceremony. Mr. Zamora gave a PowerPoint presentation about the work of the ConservationVIP Volunteers. ConservationVIP presented donated a 60 meter climbing rope, climbing harness, carabiner, and 40 pair of safety sunglasses, to the delight of the Ministry of Culture employees. In turn the Volunteers each received a copy of a newly published book celebrating 100 years since the "discovery" of Machu Picchu.





Presentation of climbing gear and safety to Ministry of Culture



### **Return Visit to Machu Picchu Sacred City**

The volunteers returned to the Sacred City on June 15 as guests of Mr. Miguel Zamora Salas. He escorted our group to the site and through the gates into the Sacred City. At noon the group met Mr. Zamora at the entrance to Huayna Picchu, where he led a hike to the summit of Uño Picchu. At the summit the group discussed the challenges facing those who manage Machupicchu. Prior to the guided hike, the volunteers hiked the Inka Trail to the Sun Gate. At the Sun Gate, the volunteers were able to see the Inka Trail system and the orientation of Chachabamba with the Sun Gate. After the Una Picchu hike, volunteers had time to further explore and experience the Sacred City

### **Acknowledgments**

Conservation Volunteers International Program acknowledges and thanks the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Environment (National Service for Protected Area Management, SERNANP), and the community of Machu Picchu Pueblo for the privilege of volunteering in Peru. We particularly thank Mr. Miguel Zamora Salas, Coordinador de Gestión of Parque Arqueológico Natural Machupicchu, Ministry of Culture, for hosting and spending time with our Volunteers

We also thank the staff of Inka Rail for arranging to stop at Km 104 to enable our volunteers to travel to the Chachabamba archaeological site to perform the work described in this report.

Special thanks are extended to our local guide Santiago Carrasco Bellota, who provided excellent historical and environmental information. He also worked with all of the volunteers at Chachabamba and at the Botanical Garden.

Barbara Kennedy and John Hollinrake,  
Trip Leaders and Directors of Conservation Volunteers International Program