



**CONSERVATION
VOLUNTEERS
INTERNATIONAL
PROGRAM**

**PROJECT REPORT
MACHU PICCHU SANCTUARY VOLUNTEER TRIP
June 12 – June 21, 2019**



ConservationVIP® Volunteers at Machu Picchu

Executive Summary

Conservation Volunteers International Program (ConservationVIP®) organized and led a volunteer trip to the Historical Sanctuary of Machu Picchu in June 2019 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 Sr. Freddy Domingo Escobar Zamalloa, Director de la Dirección Desconcentrada de Cultura Cusco - Ministry of Culture, and by Ernesto Escalante Valencia, Jefe del Santuario Histórico de Machu Picchu, SERNANP.

The projects were discussed with anthropologist José Bastante, el administrador del Parque Sr. Miguel Zamora, y el Biólogo del parque Sr. Julio Ochoa.

Twenty volunteers, including Director and trip leader John Hollinrake and trip leader Milagros Flores-Roman of ConservationVIP®, and el Licenciado Santiago Carrasco Bellota, performed 560 total hours of volunteer work related to the following projects: The primary jobs for the Conservation VIP volunteers during the June trip involved removing non-native grass and other plants in the Machu Picchu Sanctuary Museo Manuel Chavez Ballon in Aguas Calientes during day 1. During the days 2-4 volunteers worked removing non-native grasses at the upper terraces within the Sanctuary of Machu Picchu Citadel. By removing pasto gordura (*Melinis minutiflora*) from multiple locations within the Sanctuary, ConservationVIP volunteers provided an important service to the Ministry of Culture and SERNANP and contributed to the preservation of the natural and cultural environment. In addition, three volunteers assisted by the trip leaders provided an emergency response training course with a time for questions and answers to twenty-three Machu Picchu Sanctuary Park rangers.

The first day of work at the Museo Manuel Ballon included clearing Falso Kion or false ginger. This is an invasive species that the group pulled out by the root and placed in bags. Other groups worked on pulling *alocasia odora* (Elephant Ear). The area covered measured 700 meters in length x 2 meters wide. Also, debris was removed from an area located adjacent to the Botanical Garden. Cleanup of non-organics materials included: pane glass, metals, ceramic tiles, construction wood, garbage, and wire in an area of approximately one thousand square feet (=33 sq.m2).

The second to fourth days the group worked at Machu Picchu Sanctuary along upper terraces of the Citadel removing pasto gordura (*Melinis minutiflora*), the same invasive grass that was removed during prior volunteer trips. This grass is a native of Africa and has begun to out-compete native species of plants. *Melinis minutiflora* is particularly adapted to grow quickly in disturbed soils and in areas recently burned by wildfires. The officials at the Machu Picchu Sanctuary, and biologist Julio Ochoa in particular, want to eradicate this invasive species before it can completely replace native species. Volunteers contributed 420 hours over a three-day period to remove *Melinis minutiflora* from the citadel terraces. The volunteers pulled and collected 57 large sacks of *Melinis minutiflora*, under the direct supervision of park biologist Sr. Julio Ochoa and his staff.



Volunteers removing non-native vegetation from Machu Picchu Citadel upper terraces

During the trip, ConservationVIP donated equipment to help with the management and protection of Machupicchu Sanctuary. The following items were received by Mr. Miguel Zamora, park administrator:

- 1 11.4 mm Blue Water serial SN59008 rope
- 1 Jumar PETZL for rope
- 1 Black Diamond Harness
- 1 Tomahawk Trap collapsible model medium for mammals
- 1 Sherman Trap small for mammals 20 x 7 cms.
- 1 Trap camera MOULTRIE model A-40 i pro

Discussions were conducted with SERNANP and Ministry of Culture staff regarding the volunteers' activities and future projects. Trip leaders will provide this report to Sr. Luis Nieto Degregori, Director Ministry of Culture-Cusco, Freddy Domingo Escobarl Zamalloa, Ernesto Escalante Valencia Jefe del Santuario Histórico de Machupicchu/SERNANP, to Administrator of the Machu Picchu Park, Miguel Zamora Salas, and to Anthropologist Jose Bastante.

Detailed Trip Report

Volunteers met the Trip Leaders and Licenciado Santiago Carrasco Bellota in Cusco on the afternoon of June 12 and spent the next one and one-half days acclimatizing and learning about the complex and storied culture of Peru. They visited the Cusco Cathedral. In the evening we enjoyed the fine dining of a traditional Peruvian dinner while enjoying the camaraderie of the volunteer group.



Volunteers visiting the Cusco Cathedral

On June 13, volunteers visited the several important sites including the Machu Picchu Museum, Qorikancha, and the ancient Inka citadel of Sacsayhuaman for educational purposes to understand the complexity of the Spanish and Inka cultures.



Volunteers at the Inka Citadel of Sacsayhuaman

On June 14, volunteers visited the town of Chinchero, an indigenous village and former palace of Emperor Topa Inca Yupanqui. There they toured the church of Our Lady of Monserrat, Inca terraces and remains, a Huaca (Inca shrine), and experienced a short section of the Inca Trail. They visited a weaving cooperative where they learned about traditional Andean weaving techniques and ate a traditional Peruvian lunch before heading to Ollantaytambo to catch the train to Machu Picchu Pueblo (Aguas Calientes). Proceeded to check-in and enjoyed dinner at the Hotel Anka Restaurant.



On June 15, Volunteers used their entrance tickets to visit Machu Picchu where they received extensive lectures by Lic. Santiago Carrasco Bellota about the Inca culture, and preservation issues related to increased visitation as they toured the Sacred City. The volunteers returned that evening to Aguas Calientes and enjoyed a loveably dinner and rest.





Archaeological Site Volunteer Project Description

The primary job for the ConservationVIP volunteers during the June 2019 trip was to remove an invasive species of grass, *Melinis minutiflora*. This grass is a native of Africa and has begun to out-compete native species of plants. *Melinis minutiflora* is particularly adapted to grow quickly in disturbed soils and in areas recently burned by wildfires. The grass itself becomes a significant fire hazard once it cures. The officials at the Machu Picchu Sanctuary, and biologist Julio Ochoa in particular, want to eradicate this invasive species before it is able to completely replace native species.

June 16 was the first day the volunteers worked at Machu Picchu Sanctuary in the Botanical Garden. Volunteers arrived at Museo Manuel Chavez Ballon where they were greeted and provided a guided tour by Director of Machu Picchu Sanctuary Jose Bastante. After the tour the Park biologist Julio Ochoa provided an overview of the museum grounds and split the volunteers into two groups. Group 1 picked up 9 bags of exotic vegetation. Group 2 removed nonorganic material from approximately 1,000 square foot area.





On June 17, volunteers transferred to start working on the terraces of the Llaqta (Citadel) enjoying one of the most spectacular landscapes in the world.

On June 18, volunteers continued working on the terraces and two of our volunteers, emergency room nurses Deborah Marie Crane and Tai Anh Phan offered a medical emergency basic training to the Machu Picchu Sanctuary Rangers with the participation of Kevin Michael Crane, Search and Rescue Specialist. We are very grateful to our volunteers!



On June 19, kudos to the Conservation Volunteer International Program Group of Machu Picchu June 2019! They continued working on the terraces to conclude four days of volunteer work for a record total of 56 bags of "gordura grass" removed, covering an area of 20,200 square feet. Also, the removal of non-organic debris from an area of 1,000 square feet and providing medical emergency training to park rangers staff of the Machu Picchu Sanctuary. We thank you for your hard work and for making a Big Difference.



June 20th, after the conclusion of the volunteering in the Sanctuary of Machu Picchu, the group departed by train from Aguas Calientes heading to the archaeological park of Ollantaytambo where we delighted in admiring the landscape of the terraces, spectacular views of mountains and the valley, pucaros and polkas, but above all the five Condors on the Sacred Mountain. It was indicated to us it is very rare to see so many of them together these days. Then we visited a traditional Chichería where we were very kindly received by Doña Lorenza, then returned by bus to Cusco for the farewell dinner and celebration for the achievements of the group. Wishing a good return to all Volunteers and many trips to new destinations.



On June 21, The Machu Picchu Volunteer Trip ended with breakfast. Most volunteers transferred to Cusco airport for homeward-bound flights (via Lima), others extended their stay in Cusco and remained a few more days.

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 Nacional de Machupicchu, Ministry of Culture, for hosting and spending time with our Volunteers. Great thanks are also reserved for biologist Julio Ochoa, and his staff, who spent much of the time working shoulder-to-shoulder with the volunteers.

Special thanks are extended to Licenciado Santiago Carrasco Bellota, who provided excellent historical and environmental information. His work with the Peruvian ministries prior to our arrival was critical in obtaining the necessary permits to carry out our work at the Sanctuary.

Last, but not least, ConservationVIP® thanks our hardworking June 2019 Machu Picchu volunteers, for their efforts to help conserve Machu Picchu for future generations.

John Hollinrake and Milagros Flores-Roman,
Conservation Volunteers International Program