



**PROJECT REPORT  
MACHUPICCHU NATIONAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK VOLUNTEER TRIP  
November 7 - 16, 2024**

**Executive Summary**



*ConservationVIP® Volunteers at Machu Picchu*

Conservation Volunteers International Program (ConservationVIP®) organized and led a volunteer trip to Machupicchu National Archaeological Park in November 2024 in collaboration with Peru's Ministry of Culture. The project was authorized by Jorge Luis Moya Cohaguila, Director of the Decentralized Directorate of Culture, Cusco, Ministry of Culture.

The projects were discussed with Architect Cesar Ernesto Medina Alpaca, Director of Machupicchu National Archaeological Park, and park Biologist Ingrid Yuvaly Molina Navarrete, responsible for the conservation of pre-Hispanic structures of the Llaqta of Machupicchu.

Eleven volunteers, including ConservationVIP® Trip Leader Dr. Milagros Flores-Roman, and Assistant Trip Leader Architect Pablo Ojeda O'Neill, together with local guide Licenciado Santiago Carrasco Bellota, performed 322 total hours of volunteer work.

The primary projects for the ConservationVIP volunteers during the November 2024 trip involved removing invasive lichens from the ancient Inka Walls in the Machu Picchu National Archaeological Park. Specifically, during their volunteer time, the volunteers removed invasive lichens at the sites of Llamacancha (Wall of Terraces of Sector III), and at the Wall of Agricultural Sector Lower Terraces of the Llaqta or Citadel of Machupicchu.

By removing loose adhesion biological agents (lichens) of: Foliose lichens, fruticulose lichens, mosses, and Liverpool from multiple locations within the National Archaeological Park, ConservationVIP® volunteers provided an important service to the Ministry of Culture and contributed to the preservation of the natural and cultural environment. The officials at the Machupicchu National Archaeological Park, and biologist Ingrid Molina Navarrete in particular, want to eradicate this invasive species before it can completely spread over the ancient Inka walls.

At the end of the last day volunteering, the volunteer group was invited to visit the Machu Picchu Sanctuary Museum Manuel Chávez Ballón followed by a visit to the Botanical Garden where they enjoyed seeing a variety of native orchids from Machupicchu.

During the 322 hours, the volunteers covered a total of 3,470 square feet of invasive lichen, under the direct supervision of park biologist Ingrid Molina Navarrete and support staff Alexander Helio de La Cruz Llocle and Ramiro Barazorda Merma.

The trip leaders will provide this report to Archeologist Cesar Ernesto Medina Alpaca, Director of the Machupicchu National Archaeological Park, and park biologist Ingrid Molina Navarrete.

## Detailed Trip Report

The Conservation Volunteers International Program volunteer trip began on November 7, 2024. The group gathered in the afternoon in Cuzco, the capital of the Inca Civilization where the volunteers met the Trip Leaders Dr. Milagros Flores-Roman, Architect Pablo Ojeda O'Neill, and local guide Licenciado Santiago Carrasco Bellota at our hotel in the early afternoon for orientation.

After the orientation meeting, the group took a guided tour of the Cuzco Cathedral, after which they had free time to explore Cuzco on their own. In the evening, volunteers celebrated the welcome to Cusco with a succulent traditional dinner of a traditional Peruvian dinner at the Restaurant Artisano Regocijo while enjoying the camaraderie of the volunteer group. The group spent the next one and one-half days acclimatizing and learning about the complex and storied culture of Peru and enjoyed free time to explore on their own, while acclimatizing to the 11,200-foot elevation.



*Volunteers enjoying traditional Peruvian welcome dinner*



*Cuzco in the evening lights.*

On November 8, the second day of acclimatization at 11,200 feet in the city of Cusco, the volunteers immersed themselves in the Inca culture while visiting the Inca Museum, Qorikancha, and the Sacsayhuaman Fortress for educational purposes to understand the complexity of the Spanish and Inca cultures. In the evening volunteers enjoyed a fine dinner at the Restaurant Hanz Craft Beer.



*From left to right: Volunteers visiting the Cuzco Cathedral, Qorikancha, and Sacsayhuaman.*



*Volunteers at the Inka Citadel of Sacsayhuaman*

On November 9, the group traveled from Cuzco to Machu Picchu. On the way, they visited the town of Chinchero, an indigenous village and former palace of Emperor Topa Inca Yupanqui at an elevation of 13,500 ft. There they visited the 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 had an opportunity to purchase weavings directly from the weavers. We continued on our way to Ollantaytambo where we boarded the train to the town of Aguas Calientes amidst music, joy, dancing and dazzling landscapes, volunteers arrived at Machupicchu! After hotel check-in, we enjoyed dinner at Restaurant Toto's House.



*Volunteers enjoying offering to the Pachamama ceremony at Chinchero Huaca*



*Volunteers at the weaving cooperative center at Chinchero*

On November 10, Machupicchu Immersion Day!

Today the volunteers experienced what it is like standing amidst the clouds at one of the Seven Wonders of the World, the iconic Machu Picchu, a place that holds so many legends and that is still a mystery today as to how it was built. The morning was dedicated to touring its temples and residential areas of the Citadel or Llaqta, culminating with the climb of the sacred mountain of Wayna Picchu at about 9,000 feet high. After a rest, the afternoon was dedicated to visiting the higher parts of the citadel where the volunteers delighted in the most spectacular landscapes and views that they will treasure forever.

Machu Picchu, lost in time, found in wonder. The volunteers returned that evening to Aguas Calientes and enjoyed a relaxing dinner with traditional Peruvian Music at the Kaymanka Restaurant.



*Panoramic view of the Machupicchu Citadel with Apus (sacred mountains) in the background*



*Inka Citadel of Machupicchu Urban Sector*



*Volunteers in the Llaqta of Machu Picchu*



*Temple of the Condor*

## Archaeological Site Volunteer Project Description

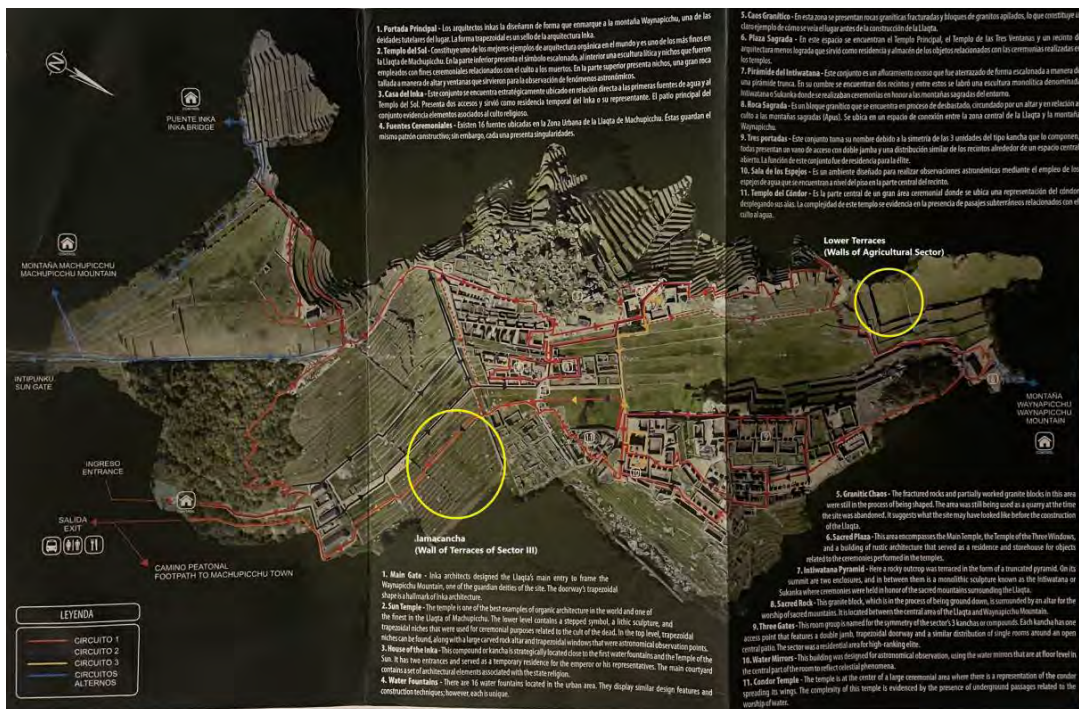
The primary job for the ConservationVIP volunteers during the November 2024 trip was to continue to reinforce Conservation VIP’s long-term commitment to working with the Ministry of Culture to aid in protecting the cultural and environmental resources of the Machupicchu Sanctuary.

The park biologist for the Sanctuary, Ingrid Yuvaly Molina Navarrete requested that the volunteers assist on removing invasive lichens species of Biological Agents of Loose Adhesion (Folious Lichens, Fruticulous Lichens, Mosses, and Liverworts) at the sites of Llamacancha (Wall of Terraces of Sector III), and at the Wall of Agricultural Sector Lower Terraces of the Llaqta or Citadel of Machupicchu. The lichens become a significant hazard to the conservation of the ancient Inka Walls. The officials at the Machu Picchu Sanctuary, and biologist Ingrid Molina Navarrete in particular, want to eradicate this invasive species before it causes more impact to the historic walls.

November 11, the best office in the world to work in!

The volunteer conservation projects began at the Llaqta or Citadel of Machupicchu. For the next four days, trip participants volunteered under the supervision of the park biologist, removing lichens from the Inca walls at Llama Kanca and the dry moat of Machupicchu. Volunteers removed 407.4 square feet of invasive lichens from the ancient Inka walls.

At the end of the day, volunteers enjoyed a relaxing dinner with traditional Peruvian dinner at Restaurant Toto’s House.





*Volunteers at the Quarries of Machu Picchu*

On November 12, the trip participants continued the volunteer projects in the Citadel of Machu Picchu in great company! On this day, the llamas of Machu Picchu came to keep us company while we worked on the Inca walls built seven centuries ago and which still remain today as vestiges of the Inca Empire, one of the most powerful and extensive civilizations that existed in the new world, extending across six countries, which today are Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, Colombia, Chile and Argentina. Under the supervision of the park biologist, the group removed lichens from 826 square feet of walls at the Llama Kanca. Later they enjoyed a traditional Peruvian dinner at the SUNU restaurant.





*Volunteers with smiles on their faces enjoy their Llama helpers for the day.*

On November 13, volunteers continue on our conservation project at the Llaqta or Citadel of Machupicchu, removing lichens at the Inka Walls of the Agricultural section A lower terraces. Working in one of the wonders of the world every day gives us a unique experience enjoying one of the most spectacular landscapes in the world, consisting of terraces, each one lower than the other, descending a cliff that drops approximately 1000 ft. to the foot of the Apus or sacred mountains. The landscape of endless chains of mountains one after the other until they disappear into the horizon is simply stunning. The volunteers removed a total of 792 square feet of invasive lichen alongside the sanctuary staff, who provided guidance and ensured that all observed safe working conditions. Volunteers enjoyed a relaxing dinner with traditional live Peruvian Music at the Restaurant Inka Wasi.



*Volunteers enjoying the best lunch break site ever!*



On November 14, Final day volunteering in Machu Picchu - forever in our hearts! The volunteers finished their conservation work in Machu Picchu today enjoying the agricultural terraces area. Enjoying the most spectacular views of the Llaqta of Machupicchu, the sacred mountain of Wayna Picchu and the entire landscape of the sacred Apus surrounding them until they get lost in the distance. There are no words to describe the majesty of the place, the gentle breeze, listening to the serenades of the birds, enjoying the continuous movement of the clouds, and watching the mist dance in front of us. Unforgettable! The volunteers removed a total of 792 square feet of invasive lichen.

The volunteers hard work was rewarded with an invitation to visit the Machupicchu Sanctuary Museum Manuel Chávez Ballón followed by a visit to the Botanical Garden where they enjoyed seeing a variety of native orchids from Machupicchu

After an intensive day of work, the Volunteers celebrated their work achievement and said goodbye to Machu Pichu with an elegant farewell dinner at the Indio Feliz Restaurant.

During the four days of work, the volunteers contributed a total of 322 hours, the volunteers covered a total of 3,471 square feet of invasive lichen including; Liquen Folioso (*Hypotrachyna Andensis*, *Hypotrachyna*, cf. *Producta*, *Pamotrema Mellissiu*, *Parmotrema* sp, *Xanthoparmelia* cf. *Farinosa*, *Stricta* sp.,) Liquen Fruticuloso (*Usnea* cf. *Erinacea*), *Hepatica foliosa* (*Frullania Brasiliensis*) and moss (*Pogonatum Campylocarpum*), under the direct supervision of park biologist Ingrid Molina Navarrete and her assistants Alejandro and Ramiro.





On November 15, the time came to say goodbye to Machupicchu. As the train took us to the rhythm of the music to our next destination, Ollantaytambo, where after a stroll through the spectacular ancient Inka city of cobbled streets, water channels and fountains, we arrived at the Ollanta Military Fortress and strategic military zone in defense of the Inca Empire.



All the wonderful moments lived in these last days danced inside us. As we celebrated with a Farewell Dinner at the Calle del Medio Restaurant, we felt grateful to have known this wonder of the world and to have contributed to its conservation. The volunteers dedicated a total of 322 hours covering 3,471 square feet in four days conducting conservation work to remove lichens in this historic Inca citadel.

## **Acknowledgments**

Conservation Volunteers International Program acknowledges and thanks the Ministry of Culture, and the community of Machu Picchu Pueblo for the privilege of volunteering in Peru. We particularly thank the park biologist Ingrid Yuvaly Molina Navarrete and support staff Alexander Helio de La Cruz Llocle and Ramiro Barazorda Merma who spent much of their time working shoulder-to-shoulder with the volunteers. A special thanks to Wilber Huillca Huillca for guiding the group through the Botanical Garden visit.

Conservation Volunteers International Program wishes to further acknowledge the support and guidance offered by Director of the Machupicchu National Archaeological Park Architect Cesar Ernesto Medina Alpaca, with whom ConservationVIP looks forward to continuing to work to expand the scope of assistance that ConservationVIP can offer to this unique cultural and environmental site.

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

Last, but not least, Conservation Volunteers International Program thanks our hardworking November 2024 Machu Picchu volunteers, for their efforts to help conserve Machupicchu for future generations.

Milagros Flores-Román, Trip Leader  
Pablo Ojeda O'Neill, Assistant Trip Leader  
Conservation Volunteers International Program

Machu Picchu until we meet again.

**Working in an area of so much meaning is the reason behind this program.**

**Safe Journey back home to our amazing volunteers.**