



CONSERVATION
VOLUNTEERS
INTERNATIONAL
PROGRAM

2024 Impact Report

Driven by purpose, not profit.



MISSION



Conservation Volunteers International Program is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to helping sustain some of the world's greatest landscapes, cultural heritage sites, and biodiversity.



2024 Overview and **WHERE WE ARE NOW**



It takes time to pull together the statistics and stories which convey our impact for the prior year. We want to share this information with you so you can understand how, with the support of many wonderful volunteers, we were able to provide important support for the destinations we serve. We also want our trip participants, volunteer trip leaders, and volunteer staff to know how much we appreciate their contributions and take this opportunity to once again thank them for all they did in 2024.

As we reflect on our 2024 impacts, we are engaged in the current world and preparing for the challenges ahead. We are keenly aware that the rapidly changing political environment in the U.S. in the opening months of 2025 has been detrimental for the causes we care about: the environment, public lands, nonprofits and many other institutions. These sweeping changes are also harming vulnerable individuals and threatening the livelihood of many others.

Witnessing this once inconceivable scenario unfolding is disorienting and stressful. When strong winds start blowing on a hike, we assess and consider next steps: Plant our feet more firmly and wait for it to pass? Adjust our stance and continue on the trail? Change direction? This political storm that is swirling around makes ConservationVIP's planning more difficult, but it also reinforces our sense of purpose. Helping public lands is at the heart of ConservationVIP's mission. Why? Because public lands protect some of the world's most wonderful landscapes, the flora that thrives there and the fauna which they protect. Public lands are also a balm for the people who visit them, allowing them to connect with nature.

Even in the best of times, public lands need help. Volunteering to help public lands is an act of support and kindness to others. It is an act that demonstrates that we care about the world and future generations both in the U.S. and in other countries, where some people now question the extent of the change in the U.S. character. Volunteering is also an act of self-care, which many of us need. Volunteering alongside others who care is a reminder of the goodness that still exists. Volunteering on public lands also allows us to immerse ourselves in the beauty of the world. And so, at the end of the day, helping public lands nurtures our own souls as well the world. We hope you will join us on this journey.



WE APPRECIATE YOU!



Because ConservationVIP's mission is to help sustain some of the world's greatest landscapes, cultural heritage sites and biodiversity, when we report on our impact, we focus on the statistics which quantify the support and protection we provide for the environment, cultural heritage sites and biodiversity.

Yet, numbers alone are inadequate to describe impact. Statistics do not capture the positive impact we make on the people at our destinations who benefit from our support. Nor do numbers adequately express the importance of the people who support us.

We accomplish our mission thanks to the dedication, generosity, and efforts of the many people who share their time, money, and passion to support ConservationVIP's activities.

We especially appreciate our volunteers who make so many contributions which enable us to achieve our collective mission.

Thank you, thank you, thank you!



VOLUNTEER DATA

2024

13 VOLUNTEER
PROJECTS

140 VOLUNTEERS

7,481 VOLUNTEER
HOURS

\$260,264
VALUE OF
VOLUNTEER TIME*



2008-2024

137 VOLUNTEER
PROJECTS

1,812 VOLUNTEERS

68,061 VOLUNTEER
HOURS

\$2,367,842
VALUE OF
VOLUNTEER TIME*



*Estimated dollar value of total volunteer hours Calculated using \$34.79/hr estimated value of volunteer time per hour calculated by independentsector.org



WAYS WE HELP

VOLUNTEER SERVICE TRIPS

We offer volunteer trips to extraordinary destinations where trip participants volunteer on environmental conservation projects.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

We sponsor Special Projects, which require longer time commitments, specialized skills, and significant funding to implement.

INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION

We seek to inspire and engage the next generation to care for our greatest natural treasures.





WAYS YOU HELPED & CAN HELP

VOLUNTEER SERVICE TRIPS

Volunteer. Be of service. Sign up for a trip and participate. If you have leadership experience, become a trip leader.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Special projects require funding. If you can, please donate.

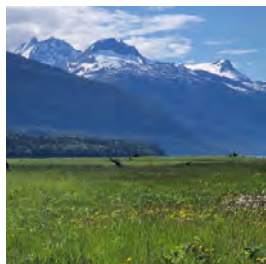
INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION

Volunteer. If you can, donate to our scholarship fund to help us send more young people on volunteer service trips.





2024 DESTINATIONS



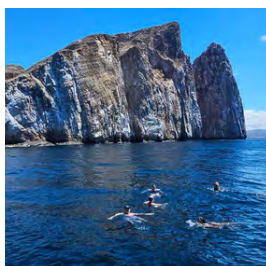
Alaska



**Cinque Terre,
Italy**



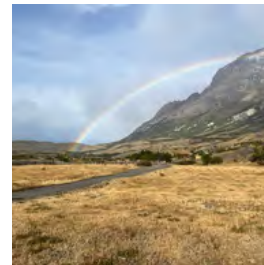
**Costa Rica
Pacific Coast**



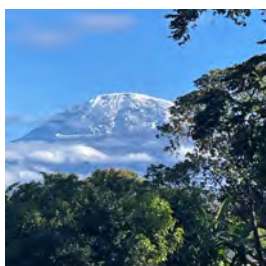
**Galapagos,
Ecuador**



**Machu Picchu,
Peru**



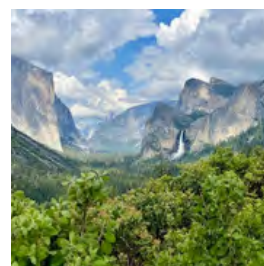
**Scottish
Highlands**



Tanzania



**Torres del
Paine, Chile**



Yosemite



**US Virgin
Islands**



2024 SPECIAL PROJECTS

Tanzania Water Catchment and Reforestation



Torres del Paine, Chile Base Torres Trail



Torres del Paine, Chile Bridge Repairs



Torres del Paine, Chile Human Waste Project





INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION

CCC Trail Crew Torres del Paine, Chile





STORIES THAT IMPACT US

ConservationVIP Salutes Public Lands Employees You Have an Impact on Us



There are some things most of us can agree on in even the most polarizing times. For instance, we can all agree that a hero is someone who selflessly puts their own needs after the needs of those they serve. They demonstrate courage and bravery. A hero is someone with integrity and passion. Most of us admire someone willing to put the greater good ahead of themselves.

Several years ago, we were working in Yosemite under the direction of the trail crew and the crew leader told us a story about safety. She said that we should never use our body to try catch a heavy log or boulder on our project. Step aside and protect yourself. She went on to tell us about a study the Park Service had done looking at trail crew injuries. Apparently, this study showed that injuries were happening when these park employees were putting their bodies in harm's way because they cared about the projects so much.

Public lands employees make sacrifice after sacrifice to the benefit of the public. Their work is hard and is often underappreciated. Yet, for so many of these public lands heroes they are grateful for the opportunity to serve. There are so many different kinds and levels of positions within these agencies and when we talk to these folks, they share a common sense of purpose and service. We salute you. Thank you.

Over the next several pages, we will share three stories from 2024 that impact us. Each of these stories features a volunteer leader with ConservationVIP who served as a public lands' employee before volunteering with ConservationVIP in retirement. Mark Hardgrove served for 41 years in the National Park Service. Millie Flores-Roman served for 28 years in the National Park Service. Garry Oye served for 36 years in the Forest Service and National Park Service. They are our heroes and they have an impact on us every day. Thank you for your service!



STORIES THAT IMPACT US



Taking time and space to
understand each other
impacts us all

There was a young man who traveled with us in 2024 who reminds us of the importance of taking the time and space to understand each other. ConservationVIP leads volunteer group travel experiences, and we understand that people come to our trips with many different perspectives. There are some travelers who are immediately comfortable in a group setting with strangers and some travelers who have never traveled in a group setting before. There are some travelers who are extroverts energized by the excitement of a group setting. There are also introverts who might need to find moments of quiet by themselves or one-on-one with a new friend or trip leader. Essentially, everyone is an individual and a member of the group.

The trip leader for this trip had been on trips with the young man's parents and had discussed the possibility of him joining a ConservationVIP trip with them. After conversation and consideration, a plan came forward for the young man to join his parents. On the first day of the trip, as with most trips, the group arrived as strangers. The trip leaders, who are volunteers themselves, led the group through the process of meeting each other and acclimating to the accommodations, food, itinerary, and destination. As the week progressed, the group joined together to complete meaningful service projects with joy and sweat, as well as enjoying meals and other activities. The young man slowly became part of the fabric of the group. By the end of the trip, the group were no longer strangers, in fact, far from it.

The young man was part of the group, and accepted by the group, as he was. The contributions he made to the volunteer projects were substantial, and he seemed to enjoy a sense of satisfaction from being an important member of the group. We always say that travelers arrive as strangers and leave as friends. Perhaps, it is excellent leaders and sharing a common purpose. Maybe, it's that everyone leaves knowing they made the world a better place. Then again, magic happens when we allow the time and space for each person to be both themselves and a member of the group.



STORIES THAT IMPACT US

Impact that goes beyond volunteer projects



“I thought it would be a regular visit, but Juliana and Guillermina had other plans.”

A heartfelt gift from Peruvian friends is a reminder that our impact reaches beyond the hours we spend on the volunteer projects themselves.

On our Machu Picchu trip, we visit the village of Chinchero and love to spend time with the artisans of Qori Puskay women's weaving center. The center was founded by Guillermina Huarhua who is a skilled artisan from the Andes who is working to preserve and honor her Incan culture and traditions. The Chinchero textiles created by the women of the Qori Puskay are beautiful works of art in the Andean tradition. Visiting the center is one of the experiences that helps volunteers begin to understand the local culture and our projects. On our November 2024 trip, volunteer leader Millie Flores-Roman was in for a surprise. As Millie recalls:

“I thought it would be a regular visit, but Juliana and Guillermina had other plans. Guillermina called for the volunteers to make an announcement, and Juliana proceeded to present me with an oil painting of me. Although the painting took me by surprise, her words moved me more. Juliana said she was trying to figure out how to show her appreciation for the help provided not only by ConservationVIP by continuing to support them for many years, but also for the support I provided during the difficult times of the pandemic. I helped them develop their online sales through a website, marketing ideas through WhatsApp, and continuing to encourage them when she calls me with a question. *Continues on next page.*



STORIES THAT IMPACT US

Impact that goes beyond volunteer projects



Since I first met the Ccorimanya family, headed by Guillermina and her daughter Juliana, I became very fond of them. They have continued to excel, and what I admire the most is that with the bit of free time they have left after all their work, they also devote themselves to guiding and empowering other women to seek development. Juliana is almost ready to graduate in Computer Engineering and has just begun a second degree in fine arts at the Diego Quispe University in Cuzco. They deserve all my respect.”

“They deserve all my respect.”

Machu Picchu is one of the greatest cultural heritage sites in the world. The spirit of the people who built this amazing site lives on in wonderful people like Guillermina and Juliana. We are incredibly grateful to have the opportunity to contribute to Machu Picchu and this community.

Thank you for having us.



STORIES THAT IMPACT US

Garry Oye - One Volunteer Who Impacts Many



How do we measure a person's impact on an organization, on fellow volunteers, on communities, on the land? It can't be done with just numbers.

To tell you about ConservationVIP's activities in Torres del Paine National Park in 2024, we need to talk about Garry Oye. Garry is a ConservationVIP® Board member, volunteer and one of our heroes. Garry's first trip to Torres del Paine was in 2004 when he took a vacation from his job as a District Ranger in Inyo National Forest in California. Little did he know that 20 years later, in 2024, he would be playing an outsized role in helping the Park.

Prior to joining ConservationVIP as a leader and Board member, Garry completed 36 years of Federal Service working for two premier land management agencies: USDA Forest Service and Department of the Interior National Park Service. In the Forest Service, he started as a Wilderness Guard and finished as a District Ranger, working at five National Forests, two Regional Offices, and the National Headquarters. His final years of

federal service were with DOI National Park Service as a Division Chief for Wilderness at the National Headquarters office. He provided leadership and guidance for all NP Wilderness, comprising 83 percent of the land in the national park system.

ConservationVIP was born from prior land managers seeing a need in Torres del Paine National Park in Chile and our work to help there continues today. We help by leading volunteer service trips and through "special projects" that require specialized skills or expertise. We also seek to inspire and engage the next generation to care for our greatest natural treasures. Since Garry joined ConservationVIP six years ago, he has led volunteer service trips, organized and volunteered on special projects, recruited other experts and organizations to help the Park and inspired future leaders.

Garry's first project in Torres del Paine after he joined ConservationVIP was working on a backcountry human waste project. In 2018 he installed a waterless, high-tech toilet unit in Old Italian Camp at the entrance to the French Valley on the popular "W" hiking trail. That campground closed after 30 years of use, but the old toilet buildings remained. In 2024, Garry returned to the Old Italian Camp and led a weeklong effort to begin the remediation effort. He developed a cleanup plan, secured approval for Phase One, and then pitched in to help with the work. Try to imagine being in the wilderness and dealing with old



STORIES THAT IMPACT US

Garry Oye - One Volunteer Who Impacts Many

bathrooms that had been used for 30 years.

Also in 2024, Garry spent weeks in Patagonia, working on a new trail to the base of The Towers, the massive granite spires which give Torres del Paine National Park its name. Since late 2021, ConservationVIP has been working to construct a new sustainable trail to replace the old trail. This special project has been a team effort that relies on a variety of partnerships. Garry's expertise has been key to connecting the various parties to move the project forward. Garry worked with CONAF (the Park's managers), Las Torres Reserve, and two nonprofits - Torres del Paine Legacy Fund, and AMA – building partnerships. He also recruited U.S. trail experts to help with the new trail, including Victoria Winch, Grady Anderson, Nick Kloos, Marc Williams, Fischer Gangemi, and Brooks Christian.

Garry also helped foster a partnership with the California Conservation Corps (the CCC). In 2024 with Garry's help the CCC sent 1 staff supervisor and 8 Corpsmembers to Torres del Paine to spend 4 weeks working on the trail to the Towers with trail expert Victoria Winch. In addition to completing a significant amount of work on the new Base Torres trail, they had life-changing experiences. Some of ConservationVIP's volunteers have experienced working with the CCC when they were paired up to work on trails with them in Yosemite. As these young, developing trail experts work their



way up through the CCC, they often earn positions with the National Park Service and become part of the elite National Park Service Trail Crews.

CCC staff member Teagan Felknor-Edwards, who helped coordinate the project, shared that following their return to California, two members of the CCC crew were accepted to the renowned Backcountry Trails Program and spent 5 months applying the skills they honed in Patagonia to trails in California. One of the Corpsmembers has since become a CCC supervisor facilitating the development of other young adults; For several of the participants, this trip was their first time leaving the US.

She also shared the following quotes from the CCC trail builders:

"The most valuable experience was being able to hike in some of the most beautiful mountains I have ever seen, and share those experiences with the people I was around, either hiking or working sharing those views made me value life more and



STORIES THAT IMPACT US

Garry Oye - One Volunteer Who Impacts Many



the excitement of it made me value life more."

"Learning the aspects of a new culture and their values was really eye-opening and got me thinking about how to take some of those values with me back to my center (i.e. community bonding, service through work, health & well-being, etc)."

It can be easy to keep moving fast and not slow down to appreciate someone like Garry. As Teagan also said, "The CCC Global Corps would have never gone to Patagonia without Garry's facilitation. He knows all the stakeholders and has developed strong local partnerships over the years. His involvement through all stages of the process facilitated incredible experiences for our Corpsmembers. For me personally, his support has helped develop my own processes as an early career professional working with international conservation programs."

So, how do you measure the impact someone like Garry Oye has on ConservationVIP, the destinations we serve, and the partners we are so fortunate to work with? It's hard. When we asked Garry for his recap of 2024, he said:

"2024 was a significant year for ConservationVIP in Torres del Paine. We continued to provide support to CONAF for the maintenance of bridges. We returned to Italian Camp to dismantle 5 abandoned Toilet buildings and assist CONAF with restoration efforts. A nine-person California Conservation Corps crew worked on the Base Torres Trail for 4 weeks. US Trail experts continued to provide Training and Skill Sharing with local trail crews."

The challenges faced are significant-this is not an easy place to work. Weather and logistics stress the most seasoned workers. At the end of the season, looking back at what we accomplished, I feel that our efforts & determination match the intensity of this wild place. It's like riding a bucking bronco, with the wind & rain in your face, and your muscles ache. But this place and the people deserve the best we can provide."

It was a good season. Garry Oye - Director, ConservationVIP"



DESTINATION SUMMARIES



Photos and excerpts from our 2024 Volunteer Trip Reports, Special Project Reports and Trip Reviews follow.

Full trip reports for all of our volunteer trips and Special Projects are available on their respective destination pages on our website at <https://conservationvip.org>



ALASKA

Our Alaska Volunteer Trip begins in Juneau, where we participate in volunteer trail projects. Juneau is the home of the spectacular Mendenhall Glacier Recreation Area and headquarters for the Juneau Ranger District of the Tongass National Forest, the nation's largest national forest. Then northward we go to Skagway, on a ferry through the deepest fjord in North America, following the route of the Gold Rush of 1898. In Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park, we help with projects on the Chilkoot Trail, the historic 33-mile route that led to the gold fields of the Yukon and Dawson City. On our final day, we whale watch and gaze at glaciers on the return catamaran ride to Juneau, where the journey ends.

June 2024 Accomplishments

In Juneau, the group helped improve 1670' of trail including the spur trail from the Mendenhall East Glacier trail to AJ Falls, a section of the Nugget Falls trail, and the historic Treadwell Ditch Trail on Douglas Island. They brushed the 0.9m Nugget Falls and photo point spur trail that included clipping, lopping, and sawing of brush and branches within 6' wide and 8' height. The group worked four days in Juneau for a total of 270 hours.

In Skagway, in the KGRNHP, the work included brushing of ~3 miles of Chilkoot trail, campground trail, the campground and parking lot, the Dyea Slide Cemetery, the Dyea historic townsite and the entrance to the Lost Lake trail improving walking paths and preserving history. They also helped split, stack, and fill the Chilkoot campground firewood shed with 1.25 cords of firewood and pulled 80 lbs. of horsetail and dandelion to enable the seeding and replantation of 275 seeds/plants at the new Chilkoot parking lot. The group worked three days in Skagway for a total of 242 hours.

In both locations, the groups were led and guided by experienced USFS and NPS personnel. USFS in Juneau also partnered with a senior group of trail workers who spent the last 8 years improving the ~18-mile historic Treadwell Ditch Trail. For insurance purposes the group is "an arm" under Trail Mix Inc. Tools and materials were provided by all agencies. ConservationVIP® volunteers contributed 512 hours in Juneau and Skagway excluding trip planning and pre- and post-trip volunteer hours by the leaders. Tools used included shovels, Pulaskis, McLeods, loppers, rock bar, hand saws, clippers, buckets, tampers, and wheelbarrows.



ALASKA

2024 Trip Review Excerpts

"The Alaska trip met every expectation and then some. Project work was fulfilling, challenging and safe. Opportunities to experience Juneau and Skagway/Dyea surroundings were wide-ranging, unique and fun. A trip to Sealaska Heritage in Juneau was a highlight. Susan and Max made it look easy as they coordinated the group's activities and needs with care and patience. In particular, their attention to dietary needs was exceptional. If you are looking for a chance to give back, challenge yourself, see the beauty of Alaska up close, and meet inspiring like-minded folks, I highly recommend this trip and Conservation VIP." R

"I can't say enough about our trip guides, the accommodations, the food, and the projects. Our organizers, Susan and Max, insured everyone's safety, enjoyment, and feeling of accomplishment. They shared their enthusiasm for Alaska and facilitated contact with experts that gave us an insider's view of southeast Alaska. Alaska will call you back again and again." Colleen C

"This trip to Alaska was a life changing experience for both my daughter and I. The work we did felt truly impactful, meaningful, and greatly appreciated by everyone we encountered, there was no fluff work here! The work days were long, but we could see the progress we made as a group and it drove us to keep going and to give it our all. Nearly all of the fellow volunteers had travelled with [ConservationVIP] before, and I think this speaks volumes of the commitment level and dedication of the people involved in this organization. One trip and you become a groupie, singing its praises to everyone you meet!!! I was already checking dates on the flight home for my next trip with [ConservationVIP]. Group travel can be intimidating if you are used to setting your own plans and pace, but I felt instantly at ease and amongst friends after our first dinner together. I am eternally grateful for this experience, and I cannot wait to attend another trip!!" Monica S.



CINQUE TERRE, ITALY

Experience the historic, colorful villages of the iconic Mediterranean hillsides and jagged coastlines of Cinque Terre, Italy. Substantially located within the UNESCO World Heritage designation boundaries of Parco Nazionale delle Cinque Terre, the area embodies the connectivity between people and nature within an exceptional scenic landscape. Our Italian guide leads us through the iconic village where we volunteer and lodge. Gain an appreciation for the environment, history, and local cuisine while helping to preserve this historic cultural and environmental marvel. UNESCO recently added dry stone walls in Italy and much of the Mediterranean to its List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

May 2024 Volunteer Trip Accomplishments

Throughout the course of the trip, 10 volunteers donated approximately 261 volunteer project hours to various tasks. These included the tying of new growth vines along 3576 linear feet of vineyard rows, as well as the clearing of organic debris from about 50 stone steps to enable safe passage between terrace levels.

October 2024 Volunteer Trip Accomplishments

The volunteer group of 14 people (11 volunteers, 2 trip leaders and 1 local guide) completed 232 hours of volunteer time between two projects. The first project involved restoration of 526 linear feet of path and stone steps on the steep pilgrimage trail from the village of Riomaggiore to the connecting trail of the Sanctuary of Nostra Signora di Montenero. The second project involved many post-harvest tasks at the vineyard Azienda Agricola Possa including: clearing unwanted vegetation from 720 linear feet of vine rows and 105 linear feet of terrace walls, post-harvest storage of 378 trays and baskets, 14 feet of fence repair, destemming 15 crates of grapes for fermentation and packing of 216 wine bottles for distribution.



CINQUE TERRE, ITALY

2024 Trip Review Excerpts

"The trip was amazing! Great leaders who put a lot of thought and effort into every detail. The food was delicious, and the accommodations were perfect!" Vivian F.

"the cinque terre trip was very well organized. ... everyone enjoyed the work project as well as other outings. i give this trip 5 stars!" Janna D

"This trip was amazing! Leaders Mark and Nancy along with local guide Giovanna executed a well thought out itinerary that included a "workplace" with breath taking views, informative outings, great food and comfortable accommodations. To share the beauty of Cinque Terre with a such a hardworking, fun loving group of people was a memorable experience." Jan

"I thoroughly enjoyed the trip to Cinque Terre. ... We worked hard at a local vineyard, helping reduce weeds, picking grapes, cleaning up grape-picking equipment and installing fence. We also cleared a hiking trail within the National Forest, removing soil, loose rock and vegetation. Our hard work made us hungry and the food we ate was excellent!" Thomas R

"[T]he Cinque Terre work trip exceeded our expectations for traveling with a purpose. Purpose for us means: 1. to help sustain and maintain unique and at-risk locations around the world. 2. Plus immersion into new cultures and learning about different cultures, customs and people. These goals were met and exceeded with the Cinque Terre Trip." Dave & Ellen W

"This is my 3rd trip with ConservationVIP. Once again, ConservationVIP delivered! Cinque Terra is a lifetime destination, but current popularity and reports of crowding may cause hesitation. Traveling with ConservationVIP with a local guide allows enjoyment of 5Terra from a different perspective.... Do not hesitate to do this trip! You will not be disappointed." Susan W

"What a fantastic trip!! The food, accommodations and logistics were great! Nancy, Mark and Tancredi (our local guide) did an amazing job leading our group.... I'll be doing this again and hope to see many of my fellow travelers/volunteers on future trips! Thank you, Conservation VIP! Well, done!" Caroline T



COSTA RICA

Join a ConservationVIP® Costa Rica Volunteer Trip to protect biodiversity while you experience conservation in the land known for its progressive environmental policies and rich biodiversity. Our Costa Rica Volunteer Trips support Sea Turtle preservation programs. Our trips also improve the habitat of the Resplendent Quetzal, which is classified as near threatened due to habitat destruction.

Starting in 2025: We now offer two different Costa Rica Volunteer Trip itineraries because different species of sea turtles lay their eggs on beaches in different locations at different times of year. We schedule our trips for times when you can both protect newly laid turtle nests AND can experience the joy of releasing newly hatched turtles from the nests which were protected in that location.

Our Pacuare Reserve itinerary in May is an ideal time to help leatherback sea turtles on the Caribbean coast of Costa Rica in the Pacuare Reserve. Our Pacific Coast Itinerary in September is an ideal time to help sea turtles who nest on the Burica Peninsula on the Pacific coast of Costa Rica.

September 2024 Volunteer Trip Accomplishments

The volunteer activities focused on the protection of sea turtles nesting on the beaches of Punta Banco, located on the South Pacific coast of Costa Rica. These conservation initiatives were carried out in collaboration with Proyecto Conservación Tortugas of the Punta Banco Community Association, a local nonprofit organization established in 2004 whose vision is to become a coastal community living responsibly with its natural and social environment, through sustainable and ecological practices.

Sea turtles nesting in the Punta Banco area typically begins in late June or early July. The peak nesting season activity is in September and October. The turtle incubation period is 45 to 60 days, depending on the temperature and turtle species. This trip was planned to occur at a time when the volunteers could help with the turtle nesting and the volunteers would have the opportunity to witness the newly hatched sea turtles and to participate in their release back to the ocean.



COSTA RICA

September 2024 Volunteer Trip Accomplishments (Continued)

The volunteer group dedicated an impressive total of 434 volunteer hours towards various projects and accomplished the following:

At Punta Banco, the group contributed 369 hours improving and maintaining the turtle hatchery nests, patrolling the beaches for new turtle nests and transferring 233 newly laid eggs to the hatchery nest, releasing 246 newly hatched turtles, and other activities which supported the turtle conservancy project.

In the cooler cloud forests of the highlands of Cerro de la Muerte, the volunteers contributed 65 hours of volunteer work on projects supporting conservation of the Resplendent Quetzal. They helped maintain trails used for viewing of the Quetzals, assisted in building new nests for the species, relocated a completed nest within a designated protected area, and planted 62 avocado trees which will eventually produce the favorite food of the Quetzal. The volunteers' efforts in creating a suitable habitat for the Quetzal were instrumental in supporting the preservation and well-being of these magnificent birds.



COSTA RICA

2024 Trip Review Excerpts

“Wow. What an incredible 9 days in Costa Rica with Conservation VIP. Watched a momma Olive Ridley turtle lay 124 eggs in her self built nest on the beach, and watched another 100 or so newborn Olive Ridley's be released to scurry into the ocean to a new beginning. Such a rewarding experience. All of us worked pretty dang hard for the cause. It was worth every sweat soaked shirt we created. We made a difference in Punta Banca, and it made a difference on us. And the Quetzal's! Built a nest, cleared a trail, built some steps, planted a bunch of avocado trees and saw several of these beautiful birds in the wild. A big highlight for us was the close relationship and connection Conservation VIP and our incredible local host Alex have with the small local communities and the people within them. We met and worked alongside some wonderful local people, even danced with a few. We wouldn't hesitate to participate in another Conservation VIP excursion. Thank you Alex, Sergio, Chris and Jim! Loved every minute of it.” Scott K

“It only took a split second before I was reminding myself why I was in Punta Banco after stepping off that bus. I had to get my head in the game! I stepped into a world so foreign to my “normal” life! The heat and humidity, the birds, the monkey's, the iguanas and the turtles - ohhhh those incredibly amazing turtles - a bucket list adventure of a lifetime for me with some truly amazing people - all there with the same mission in mind - save the turtles. My life will never be the same! After 5 days of hard work in Punta Banco, the adventure continued to the highlands altitude of 8500 ft. We worked hard every day of this trip to make a difference and to give back for the greater good. On the second half of the trip we built trails, nesting habitat and planted avocado trees. Humans are responsible for taking away some of this vital habitat for these creatures - It was so awesome to try to improve their odds for survival and relieve their burden.” Karen C

“I'm so happy to have been able to join this ConservationVIP trip! From start to finish, our days were filled with meaningful work, new experiences, and wonderful company. As a team, we worked hard to construct turtle hatcheries in Punta Banco and to improve quetzal habitat in Cerro de la Muerte. We also enjoyed incredible experiences. We witnessed a mama olive ridley sea turtle lay her eggs, and we helped collect these eggs so that they could safely incubate in the hatchery. We released newly hatched turtles and watched them begin life by scurrying from the beach to the ocean. We spent time observing a breathtaking diversity of Costa Rican wildlife, including scarlet macaws, toucans, three species of monkeys, a sloth, and the resplendent quetzal. We worked in tropical heat and humidity at Punta Banco, and in cool mountain air at Cerro de la Muerte. We were treated to good food and were introduced to some fruits and dishes that are uniquely Costa Rican. Many thanks to Jim and Chris, our ConservationVIP leaders, Alex, our awesome Costa Rican guide, Sergio, our driver, who kept us safe and comfortable along our journey, and to my fellow travelers for an amazing nine days. To anyone considering this trip, I highly recommend it!” Chris S



GALAPAGOS, ECUADOR

The Galápagos Islands are a rare and distinctive collection of volcanic islands located 600 miles off the coast of Ecuador in the Pacific Ocean. The combination of hot equatorial sun and cool ocean waters has nurtured rich marine and terrestrial environments. The islands are known for the unique variety of animals which inspired Darwin and continue to fascinate visitors today. Inspired by Darwin and the giant tortoises for which the islands were named, our volunteers travel slowly and closely observe in the Galápagos Islands as they care for it. Travelers on ConservationVIP's Galápagos trip volunteer on important conservation projects including sea turtle research and habitat protection for the giant tortoise.

2024 Galapagos - Maintaining Connections

Our work in the Galapagos was paused during 2024 as we rescheduled our December 2024 trip to January 2025. During 2024, we maintained relationships and worked on next steps for our Galapagos program. We had a successful trip in January 2025 that will be reported in the 2025 Impact Report.



MACHU PICCHU

Guided by our local Peruvian guide and experienced American trip leaders and working under the supervision of local park rangers, volunteers learn about the Inca culture and its impact while helping to preserve the Machu Picchu Sanctuary. ConservationVIP® is pleased to offer this unique and exciting opportunity to one of the world's most astounding archaeological treasures! Volunteer project sites vary in altitude from 8,000 to 11,000 feet, making this challenging for some, though past volunteers included a wide range of ages and abilities. The rewards far surpass any challenge from working at this elevation!

June 2024 Accomplishments

Eight volunteers, including ConservationVIP® Trip Leader Dr. Milagros Flores-Roman, Assistant Trip Leader and Architect Pablo Ojeda O'Neill, and Licenciado Santiago Carrasco Bellota, performed 211 total hours of volunteer work. The primary projects for the ConservationVIP volunteers during the June 2024 trip involved removing non-native grass and other plants in the Machu Picchu National Archaeological Park. Specifically, during the first three days volunteers worked removing non-native grasses at Llaqta of Machupicchu, areas of terraces, and the Intimachay platforms, lower quarries and historic walls.

The last day was dedicated to volunteering at the site of the Manuel Chávez Ballón museum assisting the Rangers cleaning an Inca wall in front of the museum of invasive plants that threatened to damage the wall.

During the 211 hours, the volunteers pulled and collected a total of 71 large sacks of non-native vegetation, under the direct supervision of park biologist Sr. Julio Ochoa, and his staff Wilber Huillca and Safety and Rescue Staff Antonio Sinchiroca Mora



MACHU PICCHU

November 2024 Accomplishments

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.

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.



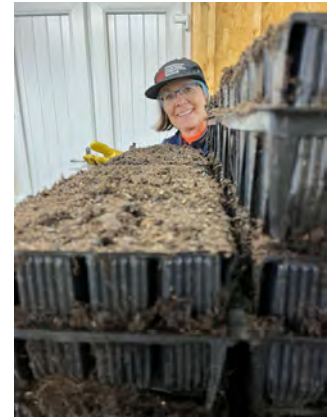
MACHU PICCHU

2024 Trip Review Excerpts

"Amazing all around! Fantastic trip leaders, great accommodations and fantastic food. Great balance of touring and volunteering. I felt I was able to see and experience more than expected. Working inside Machu Picchu, a place that people typically only get to visit for 1-2 days in a lifetime, is truly a "pinch me" experience. Fellow volunteers were all likeminded, well-traveled, intellectually curious people who made the trip even better! Looking forward to taking additional trips with ConservationVIP in the near future." Kerry P.

"A wonderful trip in a magical place with delightful people...truly a trip of a lifetime! Trip leaders were very well organized and knowledgeable. Machu Picchu is stunning. Peru is a lovely country to visit...as a first timer, was grateful to be introduced to it by ConservationVIP. Looking forward to returning in the future." Roni E.

"Please read the above reviews as I wholeheartedly agree with the positives. Food was great, accommodations, good and advisors were exceptional. Very personable interactions, as well as professional insights. A huge shout out to Santiago, who combined his humane appreciation for the land, culture, and interaction with the volunteers. Strongly recommend doing this trip." Eric



SCOTTISH HIGHLANDS

Want to plant trees to fight climate change? Join ConservationVIP's volunteer trip to help restore Loch Lomond and the Trossachs, Scotland's first National Park, and the Ben Lawers National Nature Reserve, home to Great Britain's rarest alpine plants and ecosystems.

This is a unique opportunity to volunteer under the guidance of rangers from the National Trust for Scotland (NTS) alongside the people whose life's work is dedicated to protecting some of the most significant Scottish natural ecosystems and historic sites!

Located in northern Scotland and encompassing nearly 10,000 square miles, the Scottish Highlands feature breathtaking landscapes and cultural artifacts dating back thousands of years. Early hunters and gatherers left stone tools and evidence of campsites as they followed deer herds, and farming date back to 4000 BC. The ancient Caledonian Forest once covered a large part of the Scottish Highlands with extensive strands of Scots pine, interspersed with birch, rowan, juniper, and aspen trees. As a result of centuries of modern-day agricultural overuse, deforestation, livestock grazing, and non-native tree planting for wood products, only about 18 percent of the Highlands remains forested today. This has prevented native trees, shrubs and wildflowers from growing, resulting in significant loss of biodiversity.

April 2024 Accomplishments

Our group of ten volunteers, including two trip leaders from ConservationVIP, worked in the Highlands under the supervision of two leaders from the Scottish non-profit, Trees for Life. We spent approximately 375 hours on the following projects: planted 72 native trees (36 downy birch and 36 Scots pine with inoculum or fertilizer) as part of a Ph.D. project, removed invasive trees such as Sitka spruce, removed 3,200 alder seedlings from a 108 square foot planting bed, separated and graded 1,400 of the seedlings for sale, dug up 66 willow seedlings of five varieties (downy, eared, dark leaved, tea leafed, and creeping), cleared weeds and rocks from 216 square feet of planting beds, and transplanted 544 goat willow seedlings into containers, sowed 320 blackthorn seedlings, dug out 30 downy willow seedlings, transplanted 160 dark leaved willow seedlings, dug out, graded and packed 486 oak seedlings and packed 113 gray willow and 12 alder seedlings, and cleared brush on a trail.



SCOTTISH HIGHLANDS

2024 Trip Review Excerpts

"Everything about the experience was remarkable: ConservationVIP planning and guidance from Barbara and Richard, the seamless integration with [the local] program, the range of activities, tours and of course, the weather. That our group was so compatible and productive was partially due to luck but also to your thoughtful planning. Thank you and keep me on the list for next Scotland adventure." Adrienne

"Never having visited Scotland before, and not really sure of the adventures ahead of us, I was primed for any events that [ConservationVIP and its local partner] had planned for us volunteers. We experienced a smorgasbord of beautiful mountains, lochs, crazy weather, fabulous [staff], rewilding training, and best of all, time with each other. Like other [ConservationVIP] trips I've participated in, I'm left with great memories and a real desire to return soon." Claire

"It's a ConservationVIP trip I have wanted to take for a number of years and finally did. I was not disappointed. I was most interested in learning about and participating in the reforestation efforts in the Scottish Highlands. But it was much more than that. Woven in was the history and culture of Scotland. I left having a much better understanding of this wonderful country, and also a desire to return. The accommodations, the food, the trip leaders and the [local partner's folks] were all top notch." Rex

"It was a great trip in a beautiful spot. We did good work for good cause. Local leaders were very knowledgeable and helpful. The volunteers were a nice mix of people who all pitched with all the projects and meal prep." Mary R.



TANZANIA

A land vibrant in cultural diversity, world-renowned for wide-open savannahs, lush tropical mountain forests, the Great Rift Valley at the foothills of Mt. Kilimanjaro, Northern Tanzania is best known for its abundant natural resources, wildlife safaris, and home to three UNESCO World Heritage sites.

Volunteer for reforestation and trail restoration projects near Lake Manyara National Park, part of the Great Rift Valley Escarpment, and the Rau Forest Reserve, in Moshi Town at the foot of Mt. Kilimanjaro. By supporting reforestation projects, you are not only planting trees, but you are also helping to mitigate global warming and climate change.

Join us as we gain an appreciation for the people, local cultural heritage, and the forest environments they call home while working to help protect, preserve, and restore these incredible ecosystems and landscapes.

2024 Tanzania Water Catchment and Reforestation Special Project

Although ConservationVIP did not lead a trip to Tanzania in 2024, our organization, generous donors, and the local community continued the projects we started in 2023.

The primary goal for our Tanzania Volunteer Trip is to plant trees to help mitigate the effects of climate change and desertification in the communities of Gekrum Village in Karatu and Rau Forest Reserve in Moshi. Volunteers also help restore and clean up trails in the Rau Forest Reserve in Moshi. In 2023, our volunteer group planted 1410 trees and 400 grasses. We are happy to report through our local partners that the community has continued to care for the plantings, and they have grown substantially.



TANZANIA

2024 Tanzania Special Project Continued

ConservationVIP with the help of generous donors, donated more than \$3,000 to fund a new water catchment system at Gekrum Village. During our 2023 trip, we experienced the challenge of getting water to the planting site. Our partner, Maggie Simbeye of Maggie's Tours and The Dare Women's Foundation, worked with the Gekrum Village Community to purchase and install a water catchment system. This system not only supports the reforestation work but also brings clean water to the community who lives near the project site which sits on top of a hill.

In Rau Forest in Moshi, 65% of the plantings are thriving despite drought conditions, because the community has continued to protect and care for the saplings. Trees and grasses planted at the local water spring, Njoro Juu Spring, have begun to enhance the Rau Forest's microclimates and provide improved habitat for local flora, fauna and community. Our trail work has enabled improved access for continued community conservation activities and ecotourism within the Rau Forest.

Our reforestation and trail work projects in Tanzania are helping to support the biodiversity of the area and helping to sustain and improve livelihoods of flora, fauna and the people that live in these communities.

You can read detailed reports on the continuing progress of these projects on our website. We are grateful to Maggie Simbeye of Maggie's Tours and Erick Urassa of Joining Safaris for providing these reports and for partnering with ConservationVIP on these important projects.

As Erick's report concludes: "The Rau Forest Conservation Project has successfully demonstrated how collaborative efforts between international volunteers and local communities can restore degraded ecosystems and promote environmental awareness. By combining meaningful conservation activities with cultural exchange, this initiative has inspired participants and local stakeholders alike to work toward sustainable development."



TORRES DEL PAINE, PATAGONIA, CHILE

Torres del Paine National Park in Patagonia, Chile's premier national park, has one of the most stunning mountain landscapes on earth. Visitors from around the world travel there to see this UNESCO Reserve of the Biosphere and to experience some of the best hiking in Patagonia.

Join our volunteer group, hiking the Park's most popular trail while you help to repair it. Our project focus is the trail to the Towers, the granite spires which give the Park its name. Since 2005, ConservationVIP® has been bringing volunteers to Torres del Paine to improve hiking trails and protect this international treasure. There's a reason National Geographic Traveler Magazine named this destination and our work there one of the top tours of a lifetime!

2023-2024 Base Torres Trail Accomplishments

The trail to the Towers in Torres del Paine National Park is the heavily traveled trail leading to the Torres (Towers) for which the Park is named. This historic trail is steep and heavily eroded. Water and wind remove soil and leave behind loose rocks and slippery surfaces.

For many years ConservationVIP® had an interest in working in partnership with all those who would need to be involved to construct a new Base Torres trail. In early 2022, Conservation Volunteers International Program began a multi-year partnership effort to construct a new Base Torres trail. Coordinating this effort is complex because the land at the lower end of the trail is managed by Las Torres Reserve, a reserve dedicated to the conservation of Patagonian nature and culture and
(continued on next page)



TORRES DEL PAINE, PATAGONIA, CHILE

2023-2024 Base Torres Trail Accomplishments Continued

sustainable tourism development. The public land at the upper end of the trail is managed by Corporación Nacional Forestal (CONAF). In addition to these key stakeholders, during the preparation for the project, discussions were also held with locals in Puerto Natales and Punta Arenas. ConservationVIP® agreed to recruit Trail Experts from the USA to the region, who would work with volunteers recruited by local organizations and trained by the trail experts.

By the end of March 2024, we built most of the new trail to the proposed bridge sites where the new Base Torres trail will cross Rio Ascencio. Thanks to the work of the many volunteers, our new trail is a gentle grade with outslope drainage and it is wide enough for two-way traffic. Our plan for the future is to complete the new trail to Refugio Chileno, and then restore areas in the historic trail corridor.

SUMMARY:

Our US Trail Experts and the CCC trail builders performed brushing, root removal, tread work, drainage and new trail construction. They worked hard during these long Patagonia summer days. It was a team effort that could not go unnoticed. Hikers on the trail, hiking guides, the hotel and refugio staff all cheered and thanked us for the work we were doing.

Accomplishments

7 US Trail Experts: 1780 volunteer hours

9 California Conservation Corps Trail builders: 1440 hours

2.2 kilometers of newly constructed hiker trail (brushing & tread)

11 meters of gabion constructed.



TORRES DEL PAINE, PATAGONIA, CHILE

November-December 2024 Base Torres and Old Italian Camp Human Waste Project

Garry Oye, a Board Director & Volunteer Trip Leader with Conservation Volunteers International Program (ConservationVIP®), traveled from the United States to Torres del Paine National Park, Chile in November – December 2024 to volunteer on two projects - Base Torres trail construction and cleanup of Campamento Italiano (Old Italian Camp).

The focus of the work on the Base Torres project on this trip was to continue working with local trail builders on the trail on Las Torres Reserve lands below Refugio Chileno. Since the construction of new trail on the Las Torres Reserve land began in February 2022, five km of trail have been completed, and three km are under construction with a projected completion date of April 2025. In order to open this new trail, Las Torres Reserve has planned three hard span bridges to be constructed in late 2025, which would allow a projected trail opening in January 2026.

The project at Old Italian Camp addressed the initial efforts to begin environmental cleanup and restoration of the camp which had been closed to campers when a new Italian Camp campground was built.



TORRES DEL PAINE, PATAGONIA, CHILE

November-December 2024 Base Torres and Old Italian Camp Human Waste Project Cont.

SUMMARY:

ConservationVIP volunteers Garry & Victoria provided technical support and constructed new trail. Hikers on the trail, guides, refugio staff and hotel staff all thanked us for the work we were doing.

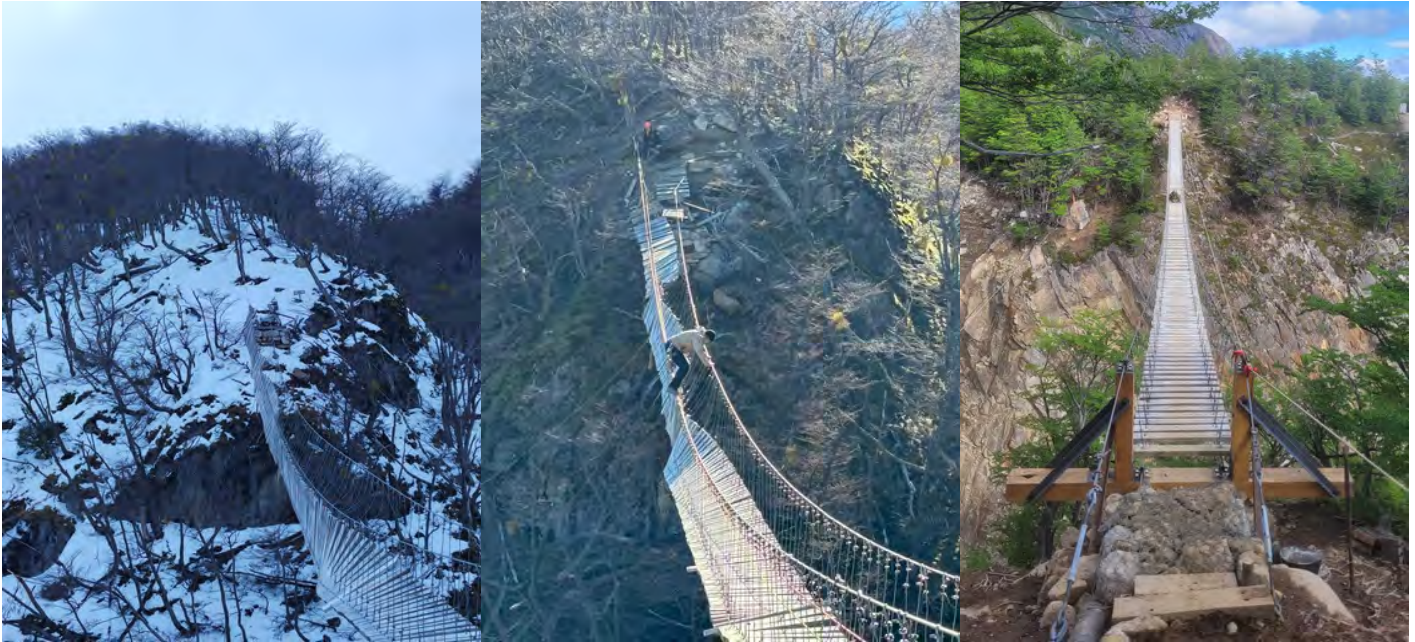
Accomplishments:

2 US ConservationVIP volunteers: 320 hours

70 meters of newly constructed hiker trail (tread)

160 meters of brushing

Phase One Cleanup of Old Italian Camp completed



TORRES DEL PAINE, PATAGONIA, CHILE

Second Quebrada (Puente Guardas) Bridge Repair

The Puente Guardas suspension bridge in Torres del Paine National Park has been repaired and reopened to hikers, after being significantly damaged by an avalanche in July 2024. Puente Guardas is a 52-meter (170 feet) long hanging bridge across the Second Quebrada, a deep ravine in Torres del Paine National Park in Patagonia, Chile. It is a critical link in the Circuit, a popular hiking trail in Torres del Paine.

The bridge was built by ConservationVIP®, so the Park turned to us for help to save the bridge. This was a very challenging, important and urgent project. ConservationVIP® volunteers originally built the bridge in 2015 to provide a safe crossing across the nearly impassible Quebrada, or gorge.

Our engineers volunteered their time and skills to investigate the damage, design repairs and advise on the repair process. Donors generously helped to fund replacement materials and other repair expenses. These efforts supported the amazing work of the Torres del Paine National Park rangers who completed the repairs in mid-November 2024 in time for the start of the hiking season.

Thanks to generous donors and with support from many other individuals, businesses and the nonprofit TdP Legacy Fund, the difficult repair of the bridge was accomplished. Thank you, to everyone who contributed!



YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

Volunteer with National Park Service trail crew to help improve and maintain trails in Yosemite Valley. Restore fragile natural resources damaged by visitor use, while enjoying vistas of the incredible granite walls. Yosemite Valley is 4,000 feet above sea level, which can pose a challenge for some, though past volunteers were a wide range of age and abilities. No prior trail maintenance or restoration experience is required. We train you in all aspects of the work. As always, your education and safety are priorities. Tasks vary, but you should be able to hike up to two miles a day on mountainous terrain with some steep ascents and uneven trails, move soil or rock with a shovel, pull unwanted vegetation, and carry stones.

You may: use a pick or shovel to contour trail tread to shed water, cut and move vegetative plugs or branches to camouflage abandoned trails and slow running water, remove rocks or abandoned asphalt from the trail tread with rock bars, clip vegetation with a lopper or hand saw to improve trail safety, and/or move crushed rock or stone to create a dry walking surface.

Yosemite Valley is a wonderful place to volunteer. Conservation Volunteers International Program is pleased to offer this exciting opportunity to protect a national treasure.

May 2024 Volunteer Trip Accomplishments

Under the supervision of the NPS climbing ranger Gus Anderson, NPS trail crew leader Brian England, and seasonal assistants Matt and Henry, the volunteer group completed 300 volunteer hours on projects which included:

- Obliteration of climbing approach trails at the base of El Capitan; social trail obliteration, brushing, tree trimming, rock removal and scattering duff
- Trail maintenance at Sentinel climbing approach trail; brushing, tree trimming, root and rock removal, scattering duff; signpost installation, removal of large, downed tree and installation of log steps at steep section of approach trail



YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

May 2024 Volunteer Trip Accomplishments Continued

- General trail maintenance along west Valley Loop Trail; scaling, tree trimming, brushing, social trail removal and removal of large, downed tree using griphoist
- Mucking at Trails and Corrals Shop; trail maintenance at Bridalveil Falls (behind parking area/bathrooms); scaling, tree trimming, and brushing
- Trash removal throughout worksites

September 2024 Volunteer Trip Accomplishments

Under the supervision of the NPS Trail Crew Leader, Eamon Schneider, the volunteer group completed 319 volunteer hours on projects which included:

- Cutting back Whitethorn Brush on the South Fork Tuolumne River Trail
- Converting previously fallen cedar trees from the Happy Isles area into cedar post for split rail fences
- General trail maintenance on the Old Inspiration Point Trail (Pohono Trail Extension) focusing on drainage, swells and enhancements to the trail route flow
- Replacing rotted out post with the newly created cedar post at the Lower Yosemite Fall area
- Social trail elimination in the Lower Yosemite Fall area

2024 Trip Review Excerpts

"Yosemite National Park is great in many ways and made even better from my volunteer experience with ConservationVIP! ... The volunteer work was meaningful and rewarding I have been on many volunteer trips, but this one was very special I come on these trips to help out environmental causes, but I always ending up improving my mental and emotional health too." Dave B.



YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

2024 Trip Review Excerpts Continued

"This was my first volunteer vacation, but it won't be my last! [I] loved the leaders, chefs, park staff, and other volunteers. I had a great time and grew as we took on tasks, worked together to accomplish common goals, and enjoyed our time together....It was so rewarding to help nature. I am glad to have an impact on improving trails, creating fence posts, and installing the posts to mend fencing. I was filled with joy to leave Yosemite a little bit better than when I arrived. We all took pride in the work that we accomplished together as a team. I miss the laughter. The memories will last me a lifetime!" Kathy G

"My volunteer trail service experiences started 6 years ago with ConservationVIP on a trip to Patagonia. A trip that was life changing and convinced me that my goal in retirement was giving back to trails where I've done a lot of backpacking and/or visited. Since then, I have volunteered with REI, Sierra Club and the Tahoe Rim Trail and then returned to [ConservationVIP] this summer for their Yosemite trip. And I strongly feel that the [ConservationVIP] organization excels in the overall experience for their volunteers. From the website description, pre-trip information packet and communication, to the outstanding leaders ... they are passionate about their mission to conserve our natural wonders and spark an interest in others. Our future National Parks and other outdoor locations are in good hands with [ConservationVIP]....I would highly recommend Conservation VIP to anyone who would love to give back to the environment, in a small way but meaningful way to preservation of our natural wonders for our future generations. If you have a teenage or college age child who loves the outdoors, looking for a possible future in a National Park or want a new experience that might spark a direction in their life, or want a great bonding trip with your son, daughter or older grandchild. A ConservationVIP trip could be that trip you or your loved ones. Needless, to say I'll be back on another trip." Pam M

"I don't like to give 5-star reviews because I feel most of them are fake. This trip experience was a true 5-star experience....Taking a Voluntourism trip carries the hope that the projects are actually beneficial to the recipient. In this case it certainly was. ConservationVIP seems to be a very legitimate organization.... Thanks to the program and the group leaders we quickly solidified into an over-achieving team. It was a diverse group of ages and abilities. From the safe place that was created, everyone found ways to contribute mightily. Any 5-star review should answer if you would (or have already) purchased the product again: I recently contacted ConservationVIP about my next trip with them." Rohn S



YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

2024 Trip Review Excerpts Continued

“This trip caught my eye a few years ago. After reading multiple trip reviews and reports, I finally committed to the experience. And, oh what an amazing experience it was! ConservationVIP was very organized and thoughtful. They not only provide a safe and supportive environment but also can back up the volunteer efforts with data so that at the end of the day or the trip, we can look back and realize that we made a positive impact on this beautiful place called Yosemite. I'll be signing up for another Yosemite adventure and/or international volunteer experience with them. This has got to be one of the best ways I can spend my vacation time!” Kim V

“This was my first time doing a volunteer trip and it was absolutely amazing. I got to meet a wonderful group of people, work on projects that will help the parks for years to come, and push myself to do things that I didn't know that I was capable of doing. The location was beautiful with lots of amazing views to look at and the leaders for my trip were great. I could trust that they knew what they were doing, they were super accommodating to the needs of the group and they created a safe space for anyone to share their needs or complaints if anyone had any.” Averie S

“I have been to Yosemite several times. This was my first time volunteering, and I cannot adequately put into words how amazing it was to experience Yosemite as a volunteer, meeting awe-inspiring people and get a glimpse "behind the curtain" of Yosemite in helping. And I will now say this trip has been my favorite way to experience this breathtaking place I decided on a whim to go, and I do not regret that decision one bit. My only complaint is that the trip was too short. Yosemite is a stunning place and being able to help and give back to this place working alongside beautiful and inspirational people is a lifetime experience that should not be missed!” Kim

“I doubt you will ever have the chance to see Yosemite like this. The park is breathtaking in the spring when the water runs out of the mountains into the valley. [W]e did satisfying work that left the park in a better condition. And we got glimpses of the park's operations (we spent two days with climbing rangers and half a day with the mule teams) that gave me a greater appreciation of the vast hidden operations that ensure visitors of all kinds enjoy their stays. Anyone who pays the entrance fee can see Half Dome, El Cap the falls and any of the other magnificent sites in the park. But few get the chance to see the park close up and from the inside like this. If sleeping on the ground is the only thing giving you pause, please think again. You will be so exhilarated by the second day you won't even care. I want to go back and I've encouraged everyone I know to join me. It is the trip of a lifetime.” Casey



U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS NATIONAL PARK

The Virgin Islands National Park is a wonderful place to volunteer. Conservation Volunteers International Program's volunteer trip in the Virgin Islands offers an exciting opportunity to protect a national and international treasure. Volunteers help Virgin Islands National Park improve and maintain trails and restore fragile natural resources, while enjoying vistas of the beautiful Caribbean. The volunteers are teamed with experienced leaders who provide training in all aspects of the work so no prior trail maintenance or restoration experience is required.

February 2024 Accomplishments

The group accomplished the clearance of vegetation and overgrowth at part of the Lower Estate Leinster Bay Ruins, on top of Peace Hill, alongside the Brown Bay trail, and on various sections of the large Annaberg Sugar plantation. The trail clearing included both sides and often low-to-the-ground hard to remove vegetation. At the Brown Bay trail, starting at the saddle down, they improved the functionality of seven rock drainages to improve waterflow. At Peace Hill, at the end of the day, the group readily cooperated in transporting a notable load of forty twelve-foot-long fence posts, weighing approximately twelve pounds each. Tools included a weed eater, loppers, clippers, handsaws and pick mattocks. Exemplifying unwavering commitment and professionalism, the group successfully executed the project of vegetation removal of nearly one acre, $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of trail and significant improvement of seven rock drainages.



U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS NATIONAL PARK

December 2024 Volunteer Trip Accomplishments

Key Achievements

- 10 volunteers and 2 volunteer leaders
- Volunteer hours including trails and cultural orientation: 314 hours
- Leadership pre/post trip planning: 166 hours
- Trail Maintenance: Cleared and restored 1.72 miles of trail, including:
 - o L'Esperance Trail 1.12 miles of vegetation and debris.
 - o Johnny Horn Trail 0.3 miles of overgrown vegetation.
 - o Brown Bay Trail 0.3 miles, including over 40 tan-tan and catch-and-keep trees.
- Site Restoration: Cleared 0.3 miles of trail and removed dense overgrowth from the lower estate Leinster Bay Ruins, preserving their historical significance.
- Community Engagement: Participated in educational sessions on turtle conservation, birdwatching, medicinal plants, and Caribbean music.

2024 Trip Review Excerpts

"This was my third USVI trip. The amazing beauty of the location, Susan and Mark as exceptional leaders and the importance of the work we accomplish has kept me coming back. Every Conservation VIP trip I've participated on has been amazing groups of people, many of whom are now friends. I highly recommend this experience." Cindy

"Overall an outstanding excursion. Mark and Susan are fantastic leaders. The setting is drop dead gorgeous. The work is hard, purposeful and rewarding. Take an air mattress to put on top of the cot, A backpacker's pad did not provide enough support over that many days." Jim



U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS NATIONAL PARK

2024 Trip Review Excerpts

"This was my third CVIP trip - wonderful way to travel for purpose, learn about/explore new places and meet and work with like-minded travelers. If you live in snow country like I do helping preserve and maintain the rock ruins and trails in a NP while overlooking beautiful turquoise water is the perfect winter break. Camping accommodations were good but do bring a good blow-up sleep pad, pillow, bungee cords/carabiners and small solar light for in the tent. Leaders Mark and Susan are fun, well organized, and a wealth of knowledge about CVIP and St. John NP.....and most importantly good cooks!" Karen

"This is a great opportunity to do meaningful work maintaining trails and ruins in the National Park. Every day we got to see beautiful scenery on hilly trails overlooking turquoise coves with sandy beaches. On our rest day, we snorkeled in one of the bays - the water was clear and we saw many beautiful fish. Some of us saw turtles and rays. Mark and Susan are excellent leaders and did a wonderful job of cooking for us at the camp. Additional activities of seeing a live band and going on a catamaran cruise were a bonus. The only caveats I would have are be prepared for moderately hot/humid weather on some days and for mosquitoes - long sleeves/pants and repellent are essential if you tend to get bitten easily." Jonathan

"This was my third CVIP and each one has been an amazing experience and brought together some amazing like-minded people. The work on this trip is hard and meaningful as we worked to preserve historical heritage sites and National Park trails. The play and fun is equally abundant to balance it out. The campsite is less than a 5 minute walk from amazingly warm and beautiful sandy beach/ocean. Susan and Mark are great leaders who take care of everyone on the trip with great hearts, great cooking and great knowledge." Esther

"On this, my first ConservationVIP trip I would definitely volunteer again. The St. John beauty was certainly an attraction given our desire to visit National Parks. My wife and I have had the pleasure of guided adventures for many years, and we've become accustomed to organized activities, coordinated transportation, and good food. Susan and Mark made this trip unforgettable with their top-notch efforts to nourish us, communicate effectively, foster friendships, and ensure we stayed focused, AND weaved in lots of fun! The local appreciation of our work—both on trail and off—was surprising to me, and added a lift to my spirits." Dan



U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS NATIONAL PARK

2024 Trip Review Excerpts

"This was my first volunteer trip and my first visit to St. John, but it certainly won't be my last. Thanks to our incredible trip leaders, Susan and Mark, who did a fantastic job organizing every detail and clearly communicating what to expect, the experience was seamless. They took care of all the logistics, so all we had to do was show up prepared to work hard and have fun. The work itself was deeply rewarding, made even better by the refreshing dip in the ocean after a day spent on the trails. The evening programs and cultural activities enriched our experience, offering valuable insights into the island's history and way of life....If you're considering a trip, I highly recommend reading the trip report on the ConservationVIP website. It provides a detailed overview of what to expect and offers a glimpse into the incredible experiences waiting for you." Tamara

"We'd been trying to get on this trip for many years and were excited a few months ago to hear they had opening for us. The Conservation VIP staff, Mark and Susan, along with Frank, the "Friends of the Park" trail coordinator made the whole experience a very positive one. Camp was rustic but quickly became "home" to the 10 like-minded volunteers..... We look forward to traveling / working some of the other ConservationVIP trips, and will definitely return to St John with them in the future." Susan

"You can't understate the beauty of this place, what a cellular pleasure it is to just be here. I felt fully involved, learning, sweating, teaching, sharing meals and stories with these wild world travelers. I had a great time. I'm someone who can't just sit on a beach and laze; I need something to do: widening overgrown trail, birding, dancing, sailing --all possible here. Come humble, leave refreshed." Jan

"[A]ll of my ConservationVIP trips so far have been amazing and thoughtfully crafted, each with its own unique vibe. [T]he Virgin Islands National Park trip is truly a hidden gem. St. John is absolutely stunning, rich in history, and home to some unique flora and fauna found almost nowhere else [I]f you are considering this trip, keep in mind that some of the trails can be steep and muddy. [T]he weather is typically warm and humid, so it's a good idea to spend some time getting in shape beforehand. [C]hecking the [ConservationVIP] gear list and reading recent trip reports may also help you decide if this adventure is right for you." Jan D



We would love to have you join us on a trip!

2025 TRIPS

January '25: Galapagos
February '25: U.S. Virgin Islands
March '25: Torres del Paine
May '25: Pacuare, Costa Rica; Yosemite
June '25: Galapagos; Alaska; Amazon
August '25: Scottish Highlands
September '25: Costa Rica; Yosemite
October '25: Cinque Terre; Tanzania
November '25: Machu Picchu
December '25: U.S. Virgin Islands

MORE INFORMATION INTERNATIONAL TRIPS

Amazon: <https://conservationvip.org/destinations/amazon-volunteer-trip/>
Cinque Terre: <https://conservationvip.org/destinations/cinque-terre/>
Costa Rica: <https://conservationvip.org/destinations/costa-rica/>
Galapagos: <https://conservationvip.org/destinations/galapagos-islands/>
Machu Picchu: <https://conservationvip.org/destinations/machu-picchu-peru/>
Scottish Highlands: <https://conservationvip.org/destinations/scottish-highlands/>
Tanzania: <https://conservationvip.org/destinations/tanzania/>
Torres del Paine, Patagonia: <https://conservationvip.org/destinations/torres-del-paine-patagonia/>

U.S. NATIONAL PARKS

Alaska: <https://conservationvip.org/destinations/alaska/>
Yosemite: <https://conservationvip.org/destinations/yosemite-national-park/>
U.S. Virgin Islands: <https://conservationvip.org/destinations/virgin-islands/>