

## Volunteer Trip Report Machupicchu National Archaeological Park June 4 – 13, 2026



*ConservationVIP Group at Machu Picchu in June 2026*

### **Machu Picchu Volunteer Trip Report, June 2026 Conservation Projects in Machupicchu National Archaeological Park**

#### **Executive Summary**

Conservation Volunteers International Program (ConservationVIP<sup>®</sup>) organized and led a volunteer trip to Machupicchu National Archaeological Park in June 2026 in collaboration with Peru's Ministry of Culture. The project was authorized by Maritza Rosa Candia, Executive Director - Decentralized Directorate of Culture Cusco, Cusco, Ministry of Culture.

The projects were discussed with Architect Cesar Ernesto Medina Alpaca, Director of Machupicchu National Archaeological Park, park Biologist Julio Ochoa Estrada, and park Historian Alex Usca Baca from the Cabinet of the Manuel Chavez Museum in the Llaqta of Machu Picchu, responsible for the conservation of the Llaqta of Machupicchu.

The primary projects for ConservationVIP during the June 2026 volunteer trip involved removing invasive vegetation from the ancient Inka Walls in the Machu Picchu National Archaeological Park. Specifically, the volunteer projects focused on removing invasive vegetation at the Llaqta of Machupicchu, areas of the Inka Walls at the Botanical Garden and the Inka Wall linked to the Museum Manuel Chavez Ballon.

The nine people in the ConservationVIP group, including ConservationVIP Trip Leader Dr. Milagros Flores-Roman, and Licenciado Santiago Carrasco Bellota, performed 189 total hours of volunteer project activity. The completed projects were carried out in two areas: the Inca Wall guarding the entrance to the Botanical Garden and Museum Manuel Chavez Ballon, and the Inca wall enclosing the lower perimeter of the Botanical Garden. The group removed a total of 41 bags of invasive vegetation from an area of 286 feet (87 meters), covering a total of 1,716 square feet (159 square meters).

By removing invasive vegetation from the ancient Inka Walls within the National Archaeological Park, ConservationVIP provided important volunteer 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, historian Alex Usca Baca, and biologist Julio Ochoa Estrada in particular, want to eradicate this invasive species before it can completely spread over the ancient Inka walls.

## Detailed Trip Report

### June 4 – Arrival and Orientation

On June 4, ConservationVIP's travelers and Volunteer Trip leader arrived in Cusco, Peru. The travelers first met the Trip Leader Dr. Milagros Flores-Roman and Licenciado Santiago Carrasco Bellota at the hotel in the early afternoon for orientation.



After the orientation meeting, they had the opportunity to visit Qorikancha, considered the most important temple of the Inca Empire until the 16th century. The Spanish conquistadors later adapted it to build the Convent of Santo Domingo in the 17th century.

< - Visiting Qorikancha

Later, the group experienced the vibrant Corpus Christi celebration, witnessing the Procession of Saints' floats from different brotherhoods as they made their way to the cathedral, surrounded by thousands of people dressed in traditional costumes and performing traditional dances. The day culminated memorably with a welcome dinner featuring flavors and performances of traditional music and dance that enlivened the evening. These orientation activities are a wonderful way to learn about local culture while acclimating to the altitude, which is over 11,000 feet in Cusco!



*The Corpus Christi celebration and enjoying welcome traditional Peruvian dinner, music and dancing.*

### **June 5 – Introduction to Inca culture and acclimatization**

On this day, the group enjoyed immersion in the Inca culture while acclimating to the high elevation in Cusco. The group visited the Cathedral, the Machupicchu Museum or Concha Museum, and the Sacsayhuaman Fortress for educational purposes of learning about the place, people and the complexity of the Spanish and Inka cultures where we will be volunteering.

The first stop was the Cathedral of Cusco, which was particularly memorable due to the celebration of Corpus Christi - the Processions of Saints' floats were on display inside the cathedral, giving the experience a mystical touch. Then, the group went to the Machu Picchu Museum, where more than 600 original objects and photos of the discovery of Machu Picchu by Hiram Bingham were on display. After a delicious lunch, they visited the Sacsayhuaman Fortress-Sanctuary, where the group was greeted by a herd of alpacas and enjoyed walking through the ruins of this iconic fortress. In this same place in a few weeks the Incan Inti Raymi festival, dedicated to the Sun God, will take place.

The day wrapped up with a fine dinner enlivened with traditional dances at Restaurant Artesano Regocijo.



*From left right: Visiting the Museum, Qorikancha, and Sacsayhuaman.*



*ConservationVIP group at the Inka Citadel of Sacsayhuaman*

## June 6 – Travel to Machu Picchu Pueblo

After breakfast, the ConservationVIP group began the day's journey to Machu Picchu Pueblo. Along the way they visited the indigenous village of Chinchero. Located at an altitude of 4,115 meters, Chinchero is where the ancient palace of Emperor Topa Inca Yupanqui is situated. In Chinchero, the group visited the Inca terraces and a Huaca (Inca sanctuary), where they had the opportunity to participate in a moving traditional ceremony honoring Pachamama (Mother Earth) and receive a blessing for their journey.

Afterward, they visited a weavers' cooperative where they learned about traditional Andean weaving techniques and had the opportunity to purchase unique pieces directly from the weavers. We continued our journey to Ollantaytambo, where we boarded the train to the town of Aguas Calientes. Amidst music, joy, dancing, and breathtaking scenery, the volunteers arrived at Machu Picchu! We checked into the hotel and enjoyed dinner at Toto's House restaurant.



*At Chinchero terraces and watching the offering to Pachamama ceremony at Chinchero Huacas*



*At the weaving cooperative center at Chinchero*



*Enjoying the train ride to Aguas Calientes and celebrating arrival in Machupicchu!*

### **June 7 - Machupicchu Immersion Day!**

Today was an incredibly special day. The ConservationVIP travelers fulfilled their dream of visiting the Sanctuary-Citadel of Machu Picchu, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a long-time bucket list destination. Every step through the ancient Inca ruins, every glance at the horizon of the Sacred Apus (mountain spirits), every stone that makes up its cyclopean walls left an indelible mark on each person. We never ceased to marvel, to breathe deeply, to fill ourselves with the pure air, and to look around as if wanting to carry that sacred place within. Visiting Machu Picchu is experiencing moments that cannot be expressed in words. We shared experiences about this first encounter with Machu Picchu and celebrated the moment with a toast of gratitude for the wish fulfilled.



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



*In the Inka Citadel of Machupicchu Urban Sector*



*In the Llaqta of Machu Picchu*



*ConservationVIP group enjoying their visit to the Machu Picchu Inka Citadel*

**June 8 – Conservation Volunteer Projects at Machupicchu Sanctuary**

*Conservation Volunteers International Program (ConservationVIP) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, dedicated to helping sustain some of the world's greatest landscapes, cultural heritage sites, and biodiversity. To fulfill our mission, we organize and lead conservation trips to extraordinary destinations. As a nonprofit, we are accountable for our actions. We take this responsibility seriously on every volunteer trip. On these trips, the travelers volunteer on environmental conservation projects because the places we dream of visiting often need our help.*

The primary responsibility for the 2026 Machu Picchu Volunteer Trip was to continue to reinforce ConservationVIP'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, Julio Ochoa Estrada requested that ConservationVIP assist in removing invasive vegetation at the sites of Llaqta of Machupicchu, areas of the Inka Walls at the Botanical Garden and the Inka Wall linked to the Museum Manuel Chavez Ballon. The officials at the Machu Picchu Sanctuary, and biologist Julio Ochoa Estrada in particular, want to eradicate the invasive species before it causes more impact to the historic walls.

On June 8, the group of volunteers from Conservation Volunteers International Program cleared vegetation on the Inka Walls at the Botanical Garden linked to the Museum Manuel Chavez Ballon of the Llaqta of Machu Picchu (Citadel of Machu Picchu). The project site was the Inca wall adjacent to the Manuel Chavez Ballon Site Museum, which contains the largest cantilevered steps in the citadel. 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.

The project consisted of the removal of invasive vegetation from the Inka wall, for a total of 18 bags, along an area of 97 feet long. The removal was done manually to minimize any impact on the wall. During the removal activity, the travelers had several close encounters with the insect world, which they observed with great curiosity and enjoyed as part of contributing to the conservation of our world heritage and the planet at Machu Picchu and a privilege that cannot be expressed in words. At the end of the day, the group enjoyed a traditional Peruvian dinner at the Toto's House Restaurant.



*Clearing vegetation at the Machupicchu Museum Manuel Chavez Ballon Inka Wall*



*Insect specimen from Machu Picchu    Another specimen with curiously inverted colors*

### **June 9 - Second conservation project day in Machu Picchu!**

Today was another glorious day of conservation project activity at Machu Picchu. The group cleaned their second Inca wall within the Machu Picchu citadel, removing a total of 10 bags of invasive vegetation along an 83 feet long Inka wall on the second terrace in the area adjacent to the Manuel Chávez Ballón Museum. And as if that were not enough, with the assistance of Sanctuary staff, the volunteers planted their own trees, contributing to both the conservation and reforestation of the historic site. The volunteers also continued to enjoy the fascinating world of insects in Machu Picchu.



*Inca wall before removal of invasive vegetation*





*Inca wall after the volunteer project*



*Proudly showing their planted tree in Machupicchu.*

### **Day June 10 – completion of conservation project activity in Machupicchu**

Today, the Volunteers celebrated the completion of their projects at the Historic Sanctuary of Machu Picchu. They finished cleaning the second Inca wall, next to the Manuel Chávez Ballón Museum. They conducted a magnificent job removing a total of 13 bags of invasive vegetation from an area of 82 feet long Inka Wall. Afterward, they were rewarded with a descent to the Vilcabamba River to reach the ruins of the third Inca wall, which is not accessible to visitors. The spectacular sunshine shining on the white river stones gave them the opportunity to appreciate another perspective of the Machu Picchu landscape, along with its beautiful wild orchids and flowers along the way.

The projects completed by the Conservation Volunteers International Program were carried out in two areas: the Inca Wall guarding the entrance to the Botanical Garden and Museum Manuel Chavez Ballon, and the Inca wall enclosing the lower perimeter of the Botanical Garden. The group of travelers removed a total of 41 bags of invasive vegetation from an area of 286 feet (87 meters), covering a total of 1,716 square feet (159 square meters).

### **June 11 - Second visit to the Llaqta (citadel) of Machupicchu, declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1983.**

It turned out to be a spectacular morning, with cloudless sky and bright sun. It turned out to be all about just soaking up the sun, the clear air, and the magnificent landscape of the sacred apus multiplying on the horizon to infinity.



At the end of the day, the group celebrated their project achievements and said goodbye to Machupicchu with a farewell dinner at Restaurant Indio Feliz, one of our favorite spots in Aguas Calientes.

### **June 12 - Bid farewell to Machupicchu and return to Cuzco via Ollantaytambo**

The group bid farewell to the world wonder of Machupicchu which had welcomed us to be part of its daily life. While the volunteers engaged in projects in areas not accessible to the general public, they were able to contemplate and enjoy the wonders contained within Machu Picchu's landscapes, its flora and fauna. There are no words to describe the majesty of the place, the gentle breeze, and listening to the serenades of the birds. Unforgettable!

We then headed to Ollantaytambo, where we visited the archaeological sites and enjoyed the magical landscape from their heights at the entrance to the Sacred Valley. The day concluded with returning to Cuzco for our farewell dinner at Restaurant Limo, where we shared our favorite stories and unforgettable moments from the magical journey to Machu Picchu.



## 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 Julio Ochoa Estrada and assistant Wilber Huillca Huillca for his support to the volunteers at the Botanical Garden.

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.

ConservationVIP thanks each of the travelers who joined us on this trip, as well as the staff of the Historic Sanctuary of Machu Picchu for allowing us to be part of their team during our stay.

Milagros Flores-Román, Trip Leader  
Conservation Volunteers International Program  
Machu Pichu Destination

Machu Picchu until we meet again.  
**Safe Journey back home to our amazing volunteers.**

