



Conservation Volunteers International Program
P.O. Box 61912, Santa Barbara, California 93160 USA
www.conservationvip.org
Tel: 805.698.6915 Fax: 805.964.8612
A Non-Profit 501c3 Tax Exempt Organization

PROJECT REPORT
MACHU PICCHU SANCTUARY VOLUNTEER EXPEDITION
November 8-22, 2008

Executive Summary

Conservation Volunteers International Program (CVIP) organized and led a volunteer expedition totaling 21 volunteers to Machu Picchu Sanctuary, November 8-22, 2008, in collaboration with Peru's National Institute of Natural Resources (INRENA), National Institute of Culture (INC), and Municipality of Machu Picchu Pueblo. Our hosts reported CVIP was the first volunteer organization ever allowed to work within the Sacred City of Machu Picchu.

Volunteers restored more than six kilometers (four miles) of trail; cleaned plants from 800 square meters (8,600 square feet) of building and terrace walls within the Sacred City; planted 142 trees; removed undesired vegetation covering an additional 92 trees that had been planted previously; administered a questionnaire prepared by INRENA to approximately 50 Inca Trail tourists; and presented a five-day technical vertical rescue training for 15 Peruvians.

In total, volunteers donated 1,120 hours of time with an estimated value of 60,000 soles (\$20,000 USD). In addition, volunteers donated approximately 30,000 soles (\$10,000 USD) of tools and equipment. Volunteers contributed approximately 100,000 soles (\$30,000 USD) in local expenditures for lodging, food and transportation.

At the end of the volunteer expedition, briefings were held with the local organizations collaborating with our efforts (INRENA, INC, Municipality of Machu Picchu, PromPeru (national tourism office), Cusco Tourism Office, PeruRail, and local community businesses (hotels, restaurants, and bus system). All spoke favorably of the expedition and the positive effect of the project upon natural and cultural resources, visitor safety, economic development in the community, and international bilateral relations.



Detailed Trip Report

In total, 21 volunteers, including five group leaders, arrived into Cusco on Sunday November 9th, 2008. Of these 21 volunteers, 13 volunteers had just completed a five-day educational tour of Arequipa in southern Peru. A two-hour Cusco city walking tour provided orientation to the history and culture of the region, providing context for the upcoming volunteer work in Machu Picchu. On Monday November 10th, volunteers participated in a full day bus tour of the Sacred Valley, visiting Sacsayhuaman, Ollantaytambo and Pisac. Three group leaders remained in Cusco to meet with INRENA and INC staff to finalize work assignments and purchase tools and food. Notably, meetings included the Director of INC and the Director of INRENA. On Tuesday November 11, volunteers traveled from Cusco by bus to Ollantaytambo, then by train to Aguas Calientes. In the afternoon, volunteers enjoyed their first glimpse of Machu Picchu with an orientation visit. From November 12- 18 (seven days) volunteers worked a variety of tasks in collaboration with our hosts. A part of one day was set aside for a detailed educational tour of the Sacred City. Upon completion of our volunteer work, participants returned to Cusco by train and bus late on November 19, enjoying a day to rest and explore Cusco on November 20. Volunteers completed their visit to Peru with a bus and walking tour of Lima before departing at midnight for the US. Volunteers arrived home on Saturday November 22.

Trail Restoration

Volunteers restored more than six kilometers (four miles) of trail. Our trail work occurred in three locations:

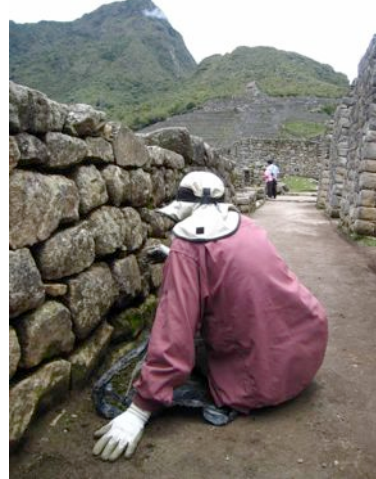
1. Chachabamba Archaeological Site & Royal Inca Trail (Railroad Kilometer 104),
2. The trail to the summit of Waynapicchu within the Sacred City, and
3. The trail from the Sacred City to the Sun Gate of Intipunku.

Trail work consisted of removing vegetation obstructing the trail, installing 174 water drains, cleaning 255 stair steps, and identifying 10 dangerous locations in the trail that required the attention of restoration experts from the INC. Volunteers were accompanied by INRENA Park Rangers or INC caretakers (*vigilantes*).



Archaeological Restoration

Volunteers cleaned 800 square meters (8,600 square feet) of Inca-constructed buildings and terrace walls within the Sacred City. The work involved carefully removing plants from stone surfaces and from the cracks between the stones. Plants adversely affect the stone features by accelerating the break down of stone, or sending roots into rock structures that then grow and eventually destroy these constructed features. All the removed plants were placed into bags. An employee of INC disposed of the unwanted vegetation to minimize windblown disbursement of collected materials that could become reestablished elsewhere in the Sacred City. Our work occurred in two areas: (a) Assemblage Area 13 that includes Intimachay (Cave of the Sun) in the area to the north of the Temple of the Condor, and (b) in the Western Agricultural Sector.



Tree Planting

Volunteers planted 142 trees along the trail near Chachabamba Archaeological Site near Kilometer 104. INRENA manages several tree nurseries within the Sanctuary that grow native trees from local seed sources. Volunteers cleared marked locations of jungle vegetation, dug holes, added a special mulch material to stimulate tree growth, and then watered newly planted trees. In addition, volunteers removed the undesired vegetation (grasses and over-story canopy) covering an additional 92 trees that had been planted previously by INRENA.



Visitor Management Survey

Volunteers administered a questionnaire prepared by INRENA to approximately 50 Inca Trail tourists. Questions requested visitor observations of the trail, trash, sanitation and visitor facilities. The questionnaire also asked visitors about their impressions of trail interactions with others (i.e. perceived crowding). The collected information will be useful in managing visitor use of the Inca Trail.



Technical Vertical Rock Rescue Course

Volunteers taught a five-day technical vertical rescue training course. A total of 15 students from INRENA, INC, and the Municipality of Machu Picchu participated in the course. The course included the proper use of anchors, belays, and rappelling, as well as the raising and lowering of a stretcher. Classroom instruction was complemented by three days of field practice. The instructors also spent a sixth day observing employees of INC working on a restoration project of the Inca Bridge (a thin ribbon of trail bifurcating a vertical rock wall), offering recommendations to improve their safety. It is noteworthy that the training course was the first time all three organizations met together to practice emergency response and rescue techniques. Donated equipment, including a significant contribution from CMC Rescue Equipment Company and the Santa Barbara County (California) Search and Rescue Team, was distributed to INRENA, INC and the Municipality of Machu Picchu. The three Peruvian organizations pledged to continue with their joint practice and emergency response.

