

1933 CCC 1942

In 1933, President Franklin Roosevelt conceived and created what would become the single most productive conservation program in our history - the Civilian Conservation Program. The CCC was a conservation program in a double sense for not only did it replant forests and check soil erosion but it reclaimed the lives of thousands of young men. In the words of historian John A. Salmond, the CCC "was important because of its effects on the nation's natural resources and the health of its enrollees,...It marked the first attempt by the federal government to provide some specific solution for the problems of youth in an increasingly urban society.

The year 1983 marks the fiftieth anniversary of CCC. The anniversary is important to the U.S. Forest Service and many other Federal, State, and local organizations. It is important because CCC projects accomplished much needed natural resource work that otherwise would not have been done. Many buildings and recreation areas that were built by CCC and the many roads and trails which were also constructed by CCC are still being used. Projects such as forest improvement and tree planting are adding benefits to today's economy. The generation that served in the CCC is now retired or nearing retirement. Many former enrollees look back on their experiences as the most significant in their lives. The following facts were put together to illustrate the lasting importance of CCC work:

1. The grinding depression of the early 1930's found more and more able-bodied men and women out of work; and, for those who could find work, wages were small... \$18 a week for men; \$9 a week for women.
2. In March of 1933, President Roosevelt proposed a program of unemployment relief to Congress...within eight days the Emergency Conservation Work Act (ECW) was passed--and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) was born.
3. The Department of Labor was charged with enrollment of eligible youths; the War Department was charged with accepting enrollees, providing the required medical examinations and assigning them to appropriate work camps. The War Department was also responsible for constructing, operating and maintaining these camps.
4. Programs of work were the responsibility of a consortium of Federal and State agencies; the Departments of Agriculture and Interior--and their agencies and divisions--had charge of work programs in the field as well as the coordination of programs on State and private lands.
5. Less than a month after ECW was passed into law, the first CCC camp was opened on the George Washington National Forest in Virginia...within three months there were more than 275,000 enrollees in 1,300 camps all across the United States.
6. The CCC program made tremendous economic impact in providing groceries, uniforms, tools, lumber, trucks...you name it...all the things needed to outfit an army of civilian conservation workers--each of whom was being paid \$30 a month (\$25 of which had to be sent home).