

Civilian Conservation Corps

The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), founded in 1933 by the U.S. Congress to provide work and job training for unemployed young men in conserving and developing the nation's natural resources. The local CCC camp which opened in the spring of 1934 near the former town of Emmons, Davidson Township, Sullivan County, five miles west of Central on the west branch of the Fishing Creek between Bloody Run and Painter Run.

By March, 1933, unemployment topped 13.5 million in the United States. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, two days after his inauguration, called a meeting of government officials to create the CCC. The plan was to put 500,000 unemployed youths to work in forests, parks and range lands.

Run by the Army, the Departments of Interior and Agriculture was responsible for work projects and provided the personnel to manage them, the budget director provided the financial assistance, and the solicitor and judge advocate gave legal advice. Rather than establish a new bureaucracy, the president established this program within existing governmental departments.

The boys to be enrolled were unemployed, between the ages of 18 and 25 and unmarried. They frequently came from families on relief. The enrollment period was for six months with the opportunity to re-enlist for another six months for a maximum of two years. Each enrollee was paid \$30 a month, of which \$25 was sent to his family. The remaining \$5 could be used by the enrollee at the camp canteen or for personal expenses of his choice. Room, board, clothing and tools were provided by the government. The enrollee was expected to work a 40-hour week and to follow the camp rules. While serving in these camps, each enrollee was taught a new skill and could also attend classes to better his education. Several of these alumni of CCC camps in Pennsylvania and Virginia will attend the August discussion for additional "first-hand" flavor.

Although projects were abundant in every state in the union, the CCC of Pennsylvania's major jobs were instituted in what is now state parks and forests in reforestation, fire protection, and recreation facilities. The state's parks and forests were greatly improved by the Corps. At its peak in 1935, the national organization had more than 500,000 members in over 2,600 camps. In 1939 the CCC was made part of the Federal Security Agency. Beginning in 1940, greater emphasis was placed on projects aiding national defense. The program lasted nine years and was a national program consisting of hundreds of projects which are still in full use today. The costs of some of the projects in modern terms would be financially impossible today. Against President Roosevelt's request, Congress abolished the CCC in 1942.

"The National Civilian Conservation Corps, not a panacea for all the unemployment, but an essential step in this emergency..."

~ President Franklin Roosevelt

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