



PEOPLE BEHIND THE PARKS: THE CCC

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Impact on Our Parks

The impact of the CCC on the development of our parks and forests cannot be understated. During the CCC era, over 4500 camps were developed. Within our National and State Parks and Forests, the men of the CCC worked in 194 camps in 94 different National Parks as well as 697 camps impacting the development of 881 state parks. They left their impact on our parks and forests by:

- Planting over 3 billion trees
- Built dams, bridges and roads (over 125,000 miles)
- Constructed 13,000 miles of hiking trails
- Constructed campgrounds, lodges, cabins, visitor centers, 3000 fire towers, and other facilities
- Repaired historic structures and military forts
- Revolutionized the sport of downhill skiing

By 1942, Congress ceased funding for the CCC to focus on war efforts for World War Two.

Introduction

The Civilian Conservation Corps was a voluntary government work relief program that ran from 1933 to 1942 in the United States for unemployed, unmarried men aged 18–25. The goal of the program was to employ over two hundred thousand men to develop public works infrastructure across the country. In response to the high unemployment rates across the country, President Franklin D. Roosevelt established the CCC as a part of his large New Deal legislation. The CCC was ahead of its time as we had not yet seen our government attempt to solve social and economic issues like those created by the

Those Who Served

At its peak, the CCC had 500,000 men serving at one time. Overall, the CCC had 3,000,000 men join its ranks. While the majority of those serving were white, unmarried men between the ages of 18-25, others also served including:

- **Veterans of World War I:** At an average age of 40, these men joined in camps that were more laid-back than the camps for younger men. Veterans served twice as long as younger men. The CCC employed 225,000 of these veterans.
- **African Americans:** Under the umbrella of Jim Crow laws, the majority of camps for African Americans were segregated from the general population. The # of African Americans serving in the CCC were capped at 10% (reflective of the population) despite living in worse economic situations. 200,000 African Americans served the CCC era.
- **Native Americans:** Over 80,000 Native Americans served in the CCC with most of them limited to work on reservations.

The men who served made \$30 a month (\$1 a day). \$25 was sent home to their families while \$5 went towards their living needs. In a time of great economic need, this money went far in supporting families.

