

CCC

After December 1941, any camps not involved in war effort projects were closed, and by the end of September 1942, all enrollees were discharged. Many of the camps were reoccupied by the armed services as training schools, or were dismantled and reestablished on military bases.

The popularity of the CCC program was attested to the high rate of re-enlistment and increasing numbers of new applicants. Although many men re-enlisted for the maximum of 2 years service, through 1940 the average length of enrollment was nine months. After 1940, with increasing employment opportunities in the war industries, the average CCC enrollee worked five months. With five months of CCC experience, the enrollees, who were increasingly in the youngest age bracket, could claim enough work experience to obtain a job in industry or even rapid advance in the armed services.

CCC constructions can still be seen in several state parks. Examples include shelters at Starved Rock, Gebhard Woods, Giant City, Illini, Mississippi Palisades, I&M Canal, Pere Marquette, Starved Rock, Trail of Tears, Fox Ridge, and White Pines parks; CCC built trails at Starved Rock Fox Ridge, and Pere Marquette,; rock campfire "council-rings" at Illini; and cabins and lodges at White Pines, Starved Rock, Pere Marquette, and Giant City state parks.



Starved Rock State Park

Roosevelt's Tree Army

Emergency Conservation Work Program

Civilian Conservation Corps

CCC



Starved Rock CCC Companies



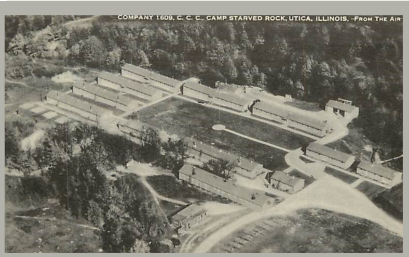
CCC Command Staff at Starved Rock.

When the stock market crashed in October of 1929, many men were put out of work. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, created the “New Deal” which was a program to put America’s unemployed men back to work during the Great Depression.

Initially, all married, unemployed male citizens between the ages of 18 and 25 were eligible to apply for work as junior enrollees, with the stipulation that a substantial portion (between \$22 to \$25) of each man’s basic \$30 monthly allowance would be sent home to his family. At its peak in 1935, when the age bracket for junior enrollees had been increased to 17 and 28, pay for unskilled workers was \$40, with \$55 for skilled labor. In 1935, enrollment was just under 506,000 men.

In addition to their cash stipend for the five-day workweek, the young men received three full meals a day, lodging, clothes, footwear, inoculations, and other medical and dental care, and, at their option, vocational, academic, or recreational instruction.

At newly forming permanent camps the lodgings were mere tents, used until the locally hired help could construct more weatherproof buildings. In 1937, all new camp buildings were designed to be portable, a feature that greatly facilitated their removal and reuse during World War II. A large CCC camp would have at least 11



Starved Rock-Parkman’s Plain Company 1609.



Sign located just outside the IDNR Starved Rock Visitor Center. Company 2601 helped to build the original section/Great Hall, fireplace, and cabins of the Starved Rock Lodge.

building, including: four barracks, a mess hall, recreation hall, infirmary, officers’ quarters, garages, latrine, and shower building. Parkman’s Plain at Starved Rock State Park contained company 1609. Two of the original CCC barracks still survive today at the park as warehouses. Companies 614, 1609, and 2601 were stationed out of Starved Rock State Park in the 1930’s.

At the advent of the 1930’s, the natural resources of the United States were in dire straits. Millions of acres of forest had been excessively logged or devastated by fires that were occurring at intervals too close to allow natural revegetation. Along with the continuing drought, many forests were further stressed by severer infestations of tree-damaging moths and beetles or fungus outbreaks. In the forests and especially in the plains, the loss of vegetation meant increased erosion through wind. In such situations, even a small rain storm could quickly cause gullies to form and loss of more arable land.

The public works taken on by the CCC were varied and monumental. Many of the large scale projects, nationally, involved the protection or reforestation of woodlands, including a major push to control forest fires. About 2.5 billion trees and 814,000 acres of grazing land were replanted. These efforts earned the CCC participants the nickname of “Roosevelt’s Tree Army”.

The CCC efforts were not confined to forest projects. The following were also due to the CCC and its work efforts in our nation:

- 7,622 dams were built
- 972 million fish were restocked
- 154 million square yards of stream banks were protected from erosion
- 52,000 acres of campgrounds were created
- 4,000 historic structures were renovated
- Buildings such as lodges, cabins, and shelters were built including the original section of the Starved Rock Lodge and its surrounding cabins and the fireplace in the Great Hall.
- Trail improvements or creation of suitable trails in both State and National Parks. Over 1,000 miles of trails created by the CCC in Illinois.
- In Illinois alone over 60 million trees were planted.