

June 3, 2007

Grant Atkinson
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ALABAMA CCC STATUE

My name is Grant Atkinson. I am 15 years old, will be a sophomore at Thompson High School, and am currently a Life Scout with Boy Scouts of America Troop 532 sponsored by Helena United Methodist Church in Helena, AL. I currently serve as the Senior Patrol Leader. I am very involved in the youth department at my church, Shades Mountain Baptist Church.

I have chosen to support placing a CCC "Tree Soldier" statue in Alabama as my Eagle Project. Specifically, my Eagle project will consist of erecting the base for the statue and raising the first \$5,000 for the actual purchase of the statue. I will continue to work toward raising the balance of the funds required for the purchase of the statue through my participation in the Congressional Award program.
<http://congressionalaward.org/>

I first heard about the CCC at Moundville Archaeological Park in Moundville, AL. The visitor orientation file at Moundville covers the importance of the work performed by the CCC in restoring the park to its current condition and building the museum and office still in use at the park today.

My Boy Scout Troop became involved with restoring the remaining eleven structures of a group camp built during the New Deal period at nearby Oak Mountain State Park. We have had a lot of fun working and camping at the site – Camp Tranquility. It became obvious to me that we must restore these pieces of history and not let them disappear forever.

Several of the adult leaders in our troop began exploring the history of the CCC and began to share with all of the scouts. Mr. John Croom, a local history teacher, shared with us about his research of the CCC and specifically about the history of Oak Mountain State Park. I later had the opportunity to meet Mr., Bob Pasquill, an Archaeologist with the National Forestry Service and a CCC historical expert.

As my knowledge of the CCC increased, I became aware of the following facts

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- Most of our state parks and several of our national parks were built by the CCC
- Several of our National historic sites were saved and restored by the work of the CCC
- Many of our National Forests and the hiking trails within them are a result of the work of the CCC
- Much of the usable land in our nation was restored via modern conservation practices introduced by the work of the CCC
- That many families were able to survive the Great Depression because of the money earned by the boys of the CCC
- That much of the success that we had in WWII was due to the strength, education, and discipline learned by the boys in the CCC camps – boys that grew to men and helped to defend our way of life in WWII.

I also learned of the CCC statue program and the goal of placing a statue in every state where the CCC worked. I also learned that Alabama did not have a statue. My dad had challenged me to identify an Eagle project that would make a difference and I decided that the CCC statue would become my project.

Moundville Archaeological Park was my first choice as the location for the CCC statue. Discussions with Mr. Pasquill helped me realize that the statue should be located at Cheaha State Park. Several wonderful examples of the famous CCC rock construction are still in use at Cheaha today. These include Bald Rock Lodge and the Observation Tower. The Observation Tower is built on the highest point in Alabama (2,407 ft). The CCC Statue will be located just to the right of the front entrance to the Observation Tower. A historical marker will be added to recognize the work of the CCC in building both our state parks as well as the National Forests, Cheaha State Park is surrounded by the Shoal Creek and Talladega districts of the Talladega National Forest. The Pinhoti Trail is soon to be the southern end of the Appalachian Trail and passes through the park.

I am working with the CCC Legacy to establish an account for fund raising and hope to have the account open soon.

Please contact me if you are interested in contributing to the statue project and I will let you know when the account is open. I can be contacted at:

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My email address is GreenGrant1@aol.com.

Sincerely,

Grant Atkinson