

Joint News Release
Camp Roosevelt CCC Legacy Foundation
And
George Washington & Jefferson National Forests

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For Immediate Release

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Virginia Hosts First Civilian Conservation Corps Appreciation Day

The first Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Member Appreciation Day will be celebrated in Virginia on March 31, 2006. The Camp Roosevelt CCC Legacy Foundation, Edinburg, VA, worked with Virginia State Senator Mark Obenshain, (R-District 26) of Harrisonburg, who introduced the resolution. Through unanimous support, recognition of this important time in history has become a reality. The USDA Forest Service is proud to have partnered with the Camp Roosevelt CCC Legacy Foundation. This designation recognizes the invaluable service of the 107,000 Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) workers who served in Virginia from 1933-1942.

On April 17, 1933, Camp Roosevelt, first CCC camp in the nation, was established in Ft. Valley, Virginia on the George Washington National Forest. This embodiment of Roosevelt's New Deal program marked the advent of the conservation of natural resources in Virginia and throughout the United States. Today, the standard for natural resource architecture is based on the fine work done by the enrollees in the CCC.

As economic depression tore at America's stability, young unemployed, unmarried men labored to renew America's natural resources. From 1933 – 1942, these young conservationist built the infrastructure of the modern outdoor recreational system and developed the tenants of conservation as we know it today. Across American, more than 3 million men, which included veterans, young adults, and Native Americans, worked on CCC projects in forest protection, conservation and natural resources development, and defense work on military reservations.

In Virginia more than 107,000 industrious, skilled, and resourceful workers served in CCC camps located in all regions of the Commonwealth. Many of these young men settled in Virginia, often with their families, during and after the depression. Youth enrollees of the CCC learned many job skills, increased personal educational standards, honed social skills and became accustomed to camp discipline that enabled them to contribute to the World War II effort and to make lifelong contributions to their families and communities.

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The work of CCC enrollees complemented the establishment of significant Virginia landmarks, as well as helped to preserve natural resources from erosion, woodland disease, and wildlife damage in national and state parks, national and state forests, fish hatcheries, and national military parks. The product of the proficient labors of the dedicated men who worked in the CCC continues to enrich and fortify the beauty, natural resources, and economic development of communities in Virginia and throughout the United States.

As an introduction to Virginia's CCC history, an elementary level educational package has been developed to assist educators, Scout and 4-H leaders and conservation specialists. These packages were placed in the local Shenandoah County Virginia School system. For those in different areas, package contents can be viewed and downloaded from the website www.ccclegacy.org.

Virginia is touched by CCC heritage. Camp Roosevelt, located in Shenandoah County, VA, was the first camp in the nation. Countless other landmarks stand as a tribute to the labor of CCC enrollees. These quiet sentinels of the early conservation movement depend on us to tell their vast history. Participation in the CCC awareness effort is a simple process: listen, record or write down what you hear, and share the information so others have access to the material. Families are the best sources of community history. Elder citizens from your family, neighbors, civic organizations, and churches hold the key to community history.

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