

United States
Department of
Agriculture


Forest
Service



The CCCs on the Nez Perce National Forest



*"Through you the nation will graduate a fine group of strong young men, clean-living, trained to self-discipline and, above all, willing and proved to work for the joy of working."
President Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1933*



The Civilian Conservation Corps (1933-1942)

As the country suffered the economic woes of the Great Depression, Franklin Delano Roosevelt extolled the virtues of hard work. In his presidential acceptance speech in July 1932, FDR began his conservation movement proposing giving city men work to restore the country to its former beauty. Thus, the CCC was born. It was devised to be a massive salvage operation destined to become the most popular experiment of the New Deal.

The Emergency Conservation Work Act created the CCC in 1933. The program was to employ men in areas of reforestation, road construction, prevention of soil erosion, and park and flood control with a goal of employing 250,000 men. By 1942, it had employed over two million men! 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 time of two years. Each enrollee was paid \$30 a month, of which, \$25 was automatically sent to his family. The remaining \$5 could be used by the enrollee at the camp canteen or for personal expenses of his choice. The government provided room, board, clothing, and tools. The enrollee was expected to work a 40-hour week and to follow camp rules. While serving in these camps, each enrollee was taught a new skill and attended classes to better his education.

The first CCC camp in the nation (Camp Roosevelt) was located in Virginia. The enrollees began enlisting into the CCC program on April 7, 1933. CCC camps were located in all 50 states and by 1942, more than 4000 had been established. Rather than establish a new bureaucracy, the president created this program within existing governmental departments. The camps were under control of the Army and resembled the regimented life on a military base of the time. The physical camp was also laid out in military fashion, consisting of barracks, a kitchen, a mess hall, a recreation hall, supply buildings, garages, storage facilities, etc. Each camp was composed of one company of about 200 men. Each company had a commander who was a regular Army or reserve officer plus a junior officer, camp doctor, and an educational advisor. The project superintendent was in charge of all work projects away from camp and had eight to ten foremen under him. These foremen were usually "Local Experienced Men" more commonly known as LEMs. The Departments of the Interior and Agriculture (Forest Service) were responsible for specific work projects and provided personnel to manage them.



The education of the CCC enrollee was designed to fit his capacity and ambition. Ample instructional personnel and equipment was made available. The enrollees learned first hand the philosophy of conservation and learned that our national resources of rivers, forests, and soil must be protected for the public good. Some of the educational activities that were offered included first aid, cooking school, photography, blacksmithing, welding, carpentry, and mechanics.

Recreation needs of the enrollee were also addressed. Each camp had a recreation hall that was equipped with all the conveniences, comfort, and entertainment including reading, writing, refreshments at the canteen, and motion pictures were available. Outdoor sports included tennis, baseball, hunting, fishing, and swimming.

At the end of his CCC service, the enrollee carried with him the remembrance of work well done, and the technical abilities that would serve him well. He had learned respect for properly constituted authority, the ability to get along with his buddies, the habit of orderly and sanitary living, and the courtesies and cooperative spirit necessary for a well ordered community. He has become impressed with the values of good manners and appearance, a properly modulated voice, and the avoidance of profanity. He goes back home a better and stronger man.



Franklin D. Roosevelt

Lewiston CCC District

The Lewiston District of the CCC was originally established on May 18, 1933 by Major Walter Mann, pursuant to instructions from the 9th Corps area headquarters in San Francisco. The Lewiston District was one of 15 districts of this Corps area covering the western states of Idaho, Oregon, Washington, California, Montana, Wyoming, and Utah. The district covered a geographic area roughly 200 miles north to south and 250 miles east to west and included the Clearwater, St. Joe, Nez Perce, Selway, and part of the Umatilla National Forests and the Palouse wheat country of eastern Washington and the Camas Prairie. At this time, the district headquarters were located in the office of the Lewiston Chamber-of-Commerce but later moved to the 5th floor of the Lewis-Clark Hotel.

CCC enrollees employed by the headquarters clerks and in the warehouse and motor transportation facilities were housed in Spalding Hall on the campus of the Lewiston Normal School for the 1933 season. The district closed for the winter on November 11, 1933. Sixteen camps were on the list to be occupied within the district during the 1934 season.

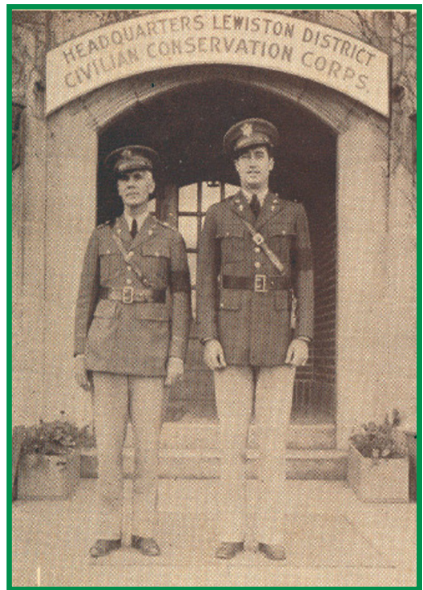
The district reopened on March 22, 1934 for its second season. Temporary headquarters were again established at the chamber-of-commerce while the district commander traveled to Orofino to review the possibility of creating district headquarters there. No suitable facilities were located in Orofino and the recommendation to the corps area commander was to maintain the headquarters in Lewiston. The headquarters were moved to Spalding Hall for the first time in 1934. The major work activity for the districts enrollees was fire fighting the Pete King Fire along the Lochsa River. The district closed for the winter on Nov. 30, 1934.

The district reopened in March 1935 under commanding officer Major Claude Stadtman. Later that spring, Major Herman F. Rathjen assumed command of the district. The major event taking place within the district in 1935 saw the conversion of summer camps to winter locations. Plans were also made for the district to remain open throughout the year. CCC companies located in the more inaccessible regions were called in to new locations more suited for winter work. A new camp was built at O'Hara.

By the fall of 1935, 13 camps were operating in the district. Each camp averaged 157 CCC enrollees with 20 officers and technical personnel.

The main work projects performed by the camps within the Lewiston district include blister rust eradication and other forest improvement work, forest fire fighting, road construction, telegraph line construction, dam building, soil terracing and other conservation activities. The type of work activities performed by each CCC camp were somewhat dependent on where the camp was located.

As of July 31, 1939, the Lewiston District was disbanded and was incorporated into the Fort George Wright District, headquartered in Spokane, WA.



District Chaplains

Camp O'Hara F-109 (#1 on map)



Camp O'Hara along the Selway River

Camp O'Hara, one of the most picturesque in the Lewiston District, was established in October 1935 with the main work project carrying them through to 1936 being road construction. The enrollees also built the Swiftwater Bridge. The first CCC enrollees at the 200-man, year round camp came from Illinois, but after the fall of 1936, most came from Arkansas. In 1937 & 1938, the 185 enrollees came from Arkansas (160) and North Dakota (25). Work projects performed by this camp included road and bridge construction, telephone line installation, trail and lookout construction, fire control duties, improving Boyd Creek Fish Hatchery, and building Fenn Ranger Station.

The buildings at Fenn Ranger Station were built between 1936 and 1940. In April 1942, there was an open house held at Fenn Ranger Station to celebrate the 9th anniversary of the CCC program. At that time, O'Hara was the last CCC camp remaining in the Clearwater area. The CCC camp at O'Hara was closed on July 24, 1942 and the camp was vacated by September of that same year. The camp's supplies and other equipment were taken to Fort George Wright while the remainder of the campsite and buildings were turned over to the Forest Service. In 1946, the Idaho-Lewis County Association of Sunday Schools secured the camp for church purposes.

*Fenn Ranger Station, 2009,
Steve Armstrong photo*

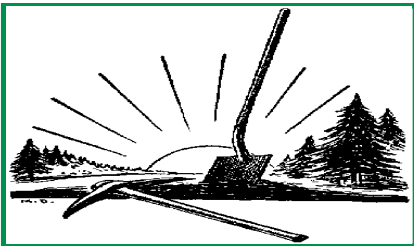


Glover Camp F-129 (#2 on map)



Glover Tent Camp at confluence of Glover Creek and the Selway River

A CCC tent camp was established here in 1934. There were about 80 enrollees from the Chicago area mixed in with a few local boys. Work projects included road construction (Fog Mountain, Indian Hill, Falls Point) and building the steel bridges across the Selway River and Meadow Creek. The Fog Mountain Road was started in May 1935 by a crew of 25 inexperienced Chicago men and boys fresh from the city. They cut the first trees from the road right of way, making them into wood. The responsibility of taking such a crew into such a country was great. The road was completed to the saddle between Little Fog and Fog Mountain.



Meadow Creek Camp F-33 (#3 on map)

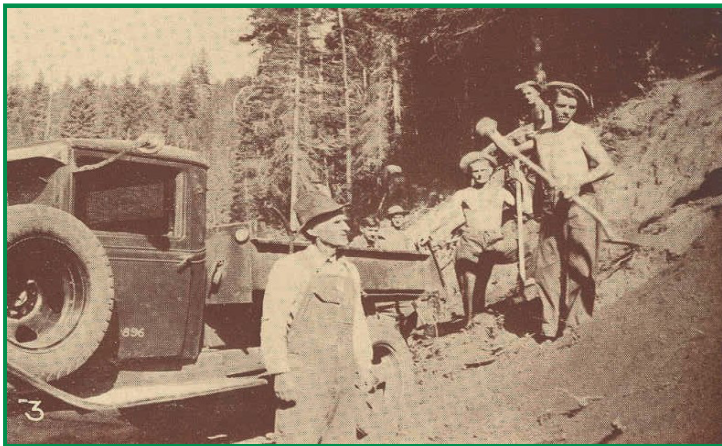
Slim's Camp was established by the CCC working in this area (1935-1937) as a base of operation while constructing the Indian Hill Road. Workers from this camp also constructed the Falls Point Road.



CCC boys from Camp O'Hara

Trapper Creek Camp

This 35 man spike camp was located 12 miles from Camp Red River.

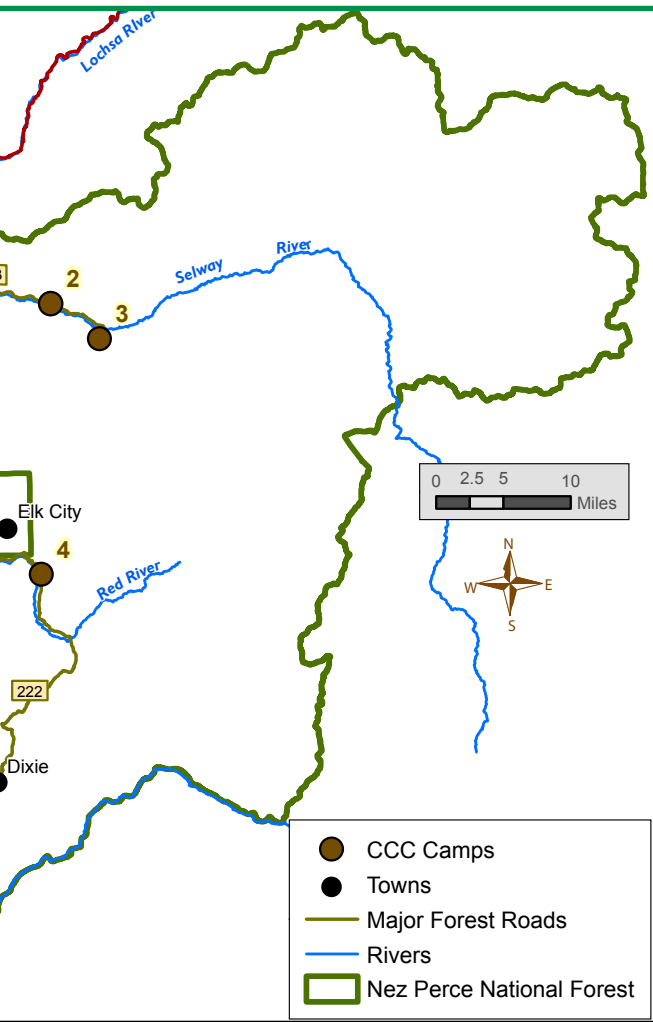


Road construction project along Red River, 1936

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Nez Perce Na



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Red River Camp F-192 (#4 on map)



Camp Red River, 1936

The Red River camp was established at the mouth of French Gulch in May 1936. Camp activities included surfacing the Elk City-Red River road and constructing the Big Mallard Road. In October 1936, the company was moved to Camp Pollock near Riggins to assume road projects on Squaw Creek and Bean Creek. The company published a semi-monthly newspaper, *Co. 570 Times*. Camp Red River was vacated by October 31, 1940.



Winter scene at Camp Red River

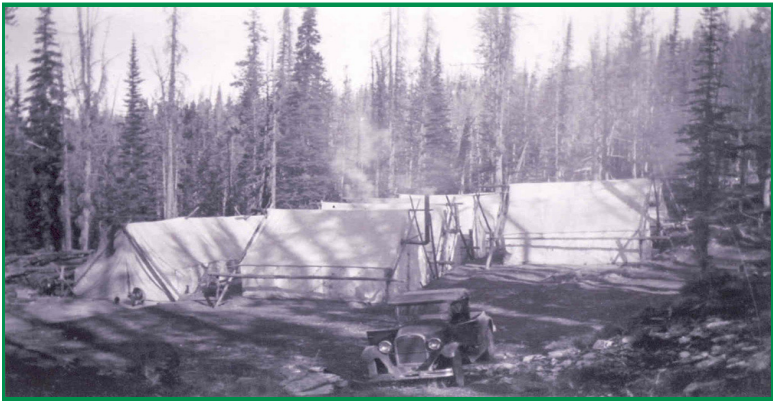
Camp Ten Mile F-144 (#5 on map)



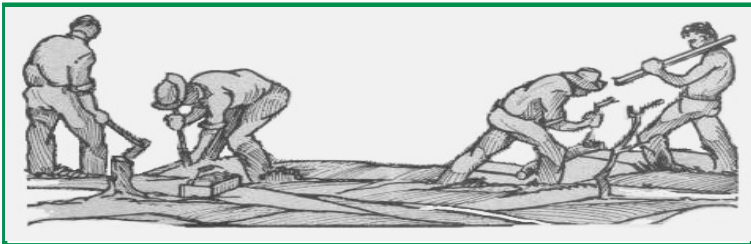
*Camp Ten Mile, Southfork Clearwater River,
Idaho State Historical Society photo*

This camp was here in 1934 for about a year. Evidence of portions of the camp are still visible today.

Green Mountain Tent Camp



1936, exact location unknown



French Creek (Salmon River) Camp F-106 (#6 on map)



French Creek Camp, 1935, K.D. Swan photo

The camp at this location was established in 1933, near the site of two old post offices. The boys of this camp constructed roads along the Salmon River and also the road which climbed steeply out of the canyon, extending southward through Burgdorf to join the McCall-Warren Road. In 1935, National Geographic Expedition members observed rock being blasted from the cliffs along the Salmon River by work crews from this camp. The Expedition spent the night at this CCC camp in October 1935. Crews also constructed the Manning Crevice Bridge, named to honor a CCC enrollee who was killed near the bridge. The Crevice bridge is 248' in length and built of creosoted timber with concrete abutments. Monetary expenditures in 1935 were \$18,065 and in 1940 they were \$6279.

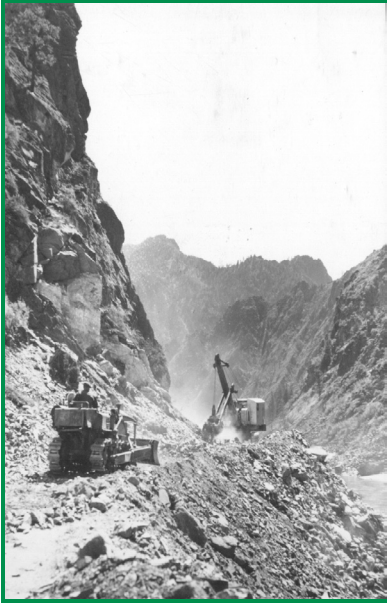


French Creek camp welcomes the National Geographic Society, 1935

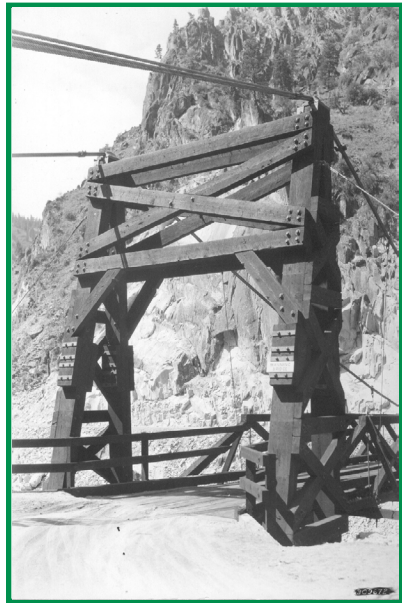


French Creek boys near the Manning Crevice Bridge, 1935

In 2006 an interpretive sign was placed here. The sign interprets early Salmon River history of the French Creek area, the CCC camp and their activities.

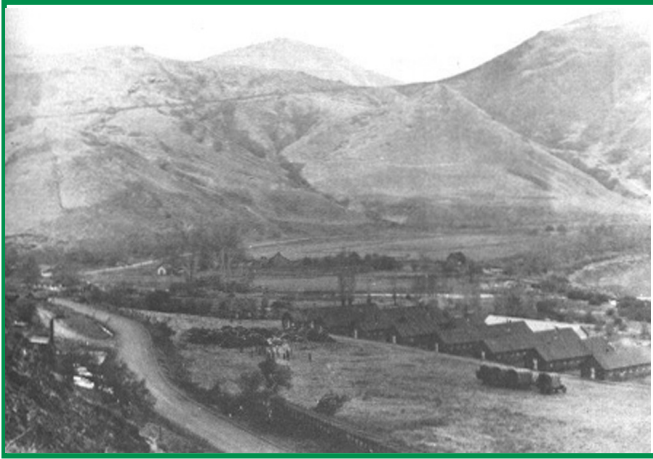


*Salmon River Road construction, 1937,
Ben W. Schubert photo*



*Manning Crevice Bridge, 1935,
K.D. Swan photo*

Slate Creek Camp F-115 (#7 on map)

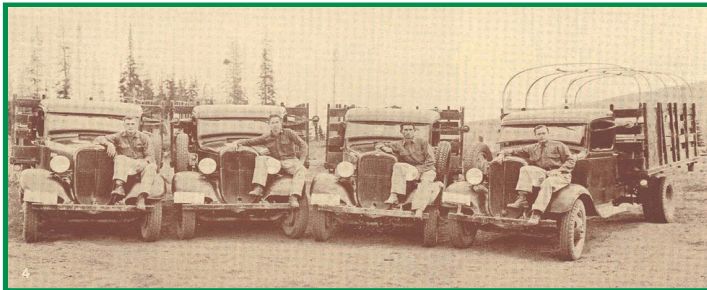


Slate Creek Camp, 1933

This camp had at least 7 structures in the 1930s during its operation. It was constructed during the winter months in 1933. In October 1935, the National Geographic Society expedition that was floating the Salmon River passed through this area and noted that the camp was deserted. Supposedly, this camp officially closed in 1936 or 1937.

Camp Pollock F-107 (#8 on map)

This camp was established approximately 2 miles south of Riggins along the North & South Highway. Work projects performed by the CCC enrollees at this camp included building roads along the Salmon River and toward the Snake River. Camp Red River enrollees were moved to this location in October 1936. Work projects included road construction along Squaw Creek and Bean Creek. By 1937-1938, the road was 11 miles up (toward the Snake River). Workers also constructed pack trails for the Forest Service. The enrollees making up this camp came from New York, New Jersey, and Delaware. The camp was vacated as of June 30, 1941.



CCC truck drivers, 1936

The national emphasis on military preparedness in the early 1940s led the CCC to place emphasis on training and work programs that contributed to the national defense. After December 7, 1941, the CCC offered its camps to the army for work on military projects. The manpower drain was tremendous as thousands of enrollees and camp administrators left the CCC to enter the military. Congress faced great pressure to abolish the CCC in 1942 and voted to stop funding after June 30, 1942. The CCC officially ended on this date.

For more information about the CCCs:

Broward County Digital Collections: <http://digilab.browardlibrary.org/cdm4/document.php?CISOROOT=/ccc&CISOPTR=188&CISOSHOW=140&REC=1>

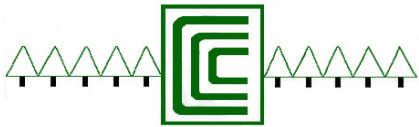
CCC on Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civilian_Conservation_Corps

History.com: <http://www.history.com/encyclopedia.do?articleId=205788>

The CCC and the National Forests: <http://www.fs.fed.us/gpnpf/research/heritage/LookingBackTheCivilianConservationCorpsandTheNationalForests.htm>

CCC Photo Library: http://newdeal.feri.org/library/browse_topics.cfm?catID=17

Idaho CCC: http://www.idahohistory.net/ASEH_CCC.html



Today, little evidence of these camps are visible. Most buildings and artifacts have been removed over the years, however, some may still remain on the ground surface or are buried. These artifacts are fragile remnants linking us to the past. Please do not disturb or remove these items as they are protected by various laws and regulations. If you find evidence of past use, contact the nearest Forest Service office to report the location of your discovery.



CCC boy



For More Information

Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests

104 Airport Road
Grangeville, ID 83530
(208) 983-1950

Salmon River Ranger District

304 Slate Creek Road
White Bird, ID 83554
(208) 839-2211

Red River Ranger District

300 American River Road
Elk City, ID 83525
(208) 842-2245

Moose Creek Ranger District

831 Selway Road
Kooskia, ID 83530
(208) 926-4258

<http://fs.usda.gov/nezperceclearwater>

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