



**PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT'S
EMERGENCY CONSERVATION WORK
PROGRAM**



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ROBERT FECHNER, DIRECTOR**

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Accepting the nomination for the Presidency, Franklin Delano Roosevelt said, in part:

Let us use common and business sense. . . . We know that . . . means of relief, both for the unemployed and for agriculture, will come from a wide plan for the converting of many million acres of marginal and unused land into timber land through reforestation . . .

In doing so, employment can be given to a million men. . . .

There is every reason to believe that the then President-elect was familiar with well authenticated facts, available here and abroad, which lead to the conclusion that the forest property of the United States (public and private) might, if fully productive, provide *the equivalent of full-time work for two million persons.*

On March 21, 1933, just 17 days after his inauguration, the President acted. Congress received his message proposing legislation to help relieve distress, to build men, to accomplish constructive results in our vast Federal, State, and private forest properties.

Ten days later the Congress had enacted that legislation. On April 5 the President appointed a Director of Emergency Conservation Work. His Advisory Council (one representative each for the Secretaries of War, Interior, Agriculture, and Labor) was formed. Immediate financing was provided from existing unobligated balances. The President requested that matters affecting size of camps, scope of work, etc., be submitted for his personal approval.

On April 10 the first quota of 25,000 men was called. By April 18 the first forest camp near Luray, Va., in the George Washington National Forest, was occupied. On May 12 the number of men to be enrolled was increased to 274,375. By July 2 all of the enrolled men were in camps selected for forestry and soil-erosion control work.

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Behind these men lie months, sometimes years, of enforced idleness. Privation and hunger have not been uncommon. Many of the men have been forced to accept charity.

Ahead lies worth-while work—an opportunity to reestablish normal relations with life, to re-create their own faith in the future as well as the faith of relatives and friends in the men themselves; and an opportunity to send home, each month, up to \$25 to help make their families self-supporting.

PURPOSES

The project is essentially one of restoring confidence; of building men. This major objective has been recognized from the very beginning. Emphasis repeatedly has been placed upon it.

The best way to accomplish it is through worth-while work. And, within the limits imposed, the most pressing and productive work is that which will—

Help to protect, develop, and perpetuate existing forests.

Help to prevent soil erosion which aggravates damage from floods.

Help to establish new, and reestablish old, forests.

Since our forest problem is a national one, respecting neither artificial boundaries nor land ownership, this work has been undertaken where it exists, irrespective of State lines; on land in Federal and State ownership or on private land when necessary in the public interest, and provided, of course, that State and private owners agree.

ORGANIZATION

Robert Fechner is, by Presidential appointment, Director of the Emergency Conservation Work project. His Advisory Council includes Robert Y. Stuart, Chief Forester, United States Department of Agriculture; Arno B. Cammerer, Director of the National Park Service, Department of the Interior; W. Frank Persons, of the Department of

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Labor; and Col. Duncan K. Major, of the War Department.

Responsibility for carrying out the program is lodged with—

The Department of Labor, which established quotas, selected the men, and determined when they should be called for enrollment.

The War Department, which enrolled the men presented by the Labor Department, transported, outfitted, and conditioned them; supervised the construction of forest camps and transported the men to them from conditioning camps at Army posts. And to the Army is given the task of operating those camps as to administration, subsistence, sanitation, medical care, and leisure-time activities. Trained Army personnel is therefore responsible for the men and their welfare from the time of enrollment to the time of discharge excepting during working hours, which have been established as 40 hours per week.

The Department of Agriculture, which, through its Forest Service, selects all camp locations and work projects on the National Forests; furnishes equipment and transportation for, and plans and supervises execution of the work on, those forests. It must, in addition, recommend for or against all projects on State and private land (excepting State parks) and is charged with the responsibility of supervising, assisting, and advising with State authorities in the conduct of the work done on such projects.

The Department of the Interior, which, through its National Park Service, functions within the National Parks, and on State Parks, as does the Department of Agriculture (Forest Service) on National Forests and on State and private lands. Within Indian Reservations the Indian Service (Department of the Interior) is responsible throughout. The Department of Labor does not assume duties in connection with selection, nor does the Army have to do with enrollment of men or the construction and operation of forest camps on Indian Reservations.

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It should clearly be understood that, despite the important part played by the Army, no man who has been enrolled for Emergency Conservation Work has joined the Army. Nowhere is there an Army obligation for the enrolled men. Nowhere is there military drill, manual of arms, or military discipline.

And it is, of course, equally true that no man has been forced to enroll; no one has been drafted. Membership in the Civilian Conservation Corps is entirely upon a voluntary basis. It is a privilege extended to young unmarried men between the ages of 18 and 25 who are known by the local selection agencies.

THE MEN

The national quota as originally determined upon was a quarter of a million (250,000) young unmarried men. To that number was added 24,375 older men living in or near the forests who were especially selected for their experience and knowledge of woods work. This raised the original quota to 274,375.

Then the President authorized the enrollment of 25,000 veterans with the express provision that this contingent should have its own organization and its own camps; that it should in effect be a distinct and self-contained unit of the Emergency Conservation Work project.

In the meantime the problem of the Indians, and of much-needed work on Indian Reservations, was met by authorizing the employment of not to exceed 14,400 Indians in addition to the national and the veterans quotas.

On the basis of 200 men to a camp, and excepting the Indians—for on Indian Reservations the 200-men camp plan is not being followed—the number of camps at which men are engaged in Emergency Conservation Work this summer is—

	<i>Camps</i>
National quota.....	1,301
Veterans quota	139
Total	1,440

There are camps in every State except Delaware.

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THE WORK

The work varies, of course, as between Maine and California, Montana and Florida. It varies, too, with ownership and control of the land on which it is being done and with the purposes for which that land and its resources are being administered.

Forest improvement thinnings are an example in point. Such thinnings form an appreciable proportion of the work being done on the National Forests, that vast 160-million-acre farm on which trees are grown, harvested, then grown again. But on National and State parks, where no harvesting of timber is contemplated and natural conditions are to be preserved, forest improvement thinnings obviously have no place.

In each one of the 1,440 forest camps are two Army officers, Regular or Reserve. In each camp are foresters, or other experts (depending on the work to be done), many of whom might otherwise be out of work. In each camp are approximately 15 experienced woodsmen who otherwise would be out of work; the number varies with varying conditions. And last, but by no means least, in each camp are on the average, about 185 young, unmarried men who for months, or years, have been desperately searching for work.

Each forest camp is in effect a community, larger than many an established community, in the West, the South, or the East. And each camp is self-contained; for cooks, barbers, machinists, and the like are chosen, wherever possible, from its own personnel.

Ahead of every man, in every camp, lie months of interesting, worth-while work amidst healthy surroundings. Clothing, housing, subsistence, medical attention, and recreational, educational, and religious facilities are furnished. Experienced leadership, at work and in camp, is assured. There is, too, a cash allowance, part of which goes to less fortunate dependents. And incentives—in the form of increased allowances—may be won by the more ambitious.

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Mention of any one kind of work does not mean that it is being done in every camp. But certain work is so widespread, or has so impressed itself upon the public imagination, that it deserves brief mention here.

Popular thought connects the work of the Civilian Conservation Corps with the planting of trees. True, tree planting will be done, but it will constitute but a small part of the program. Why? Because there are far too few nursery-grown trees of the right kind and too short a time, when climatic and weather conditions are favorable, in which to plant trees or even to sow tree seeds.

The main work—aside from that of restoring confidence and building men, which is the major objective in the entire program—is “to help protect, develop, and perpetuate our existing forests.”

Every year millions of acres of timber are damaged or totally destroyed by fires that sweep over them. During the 10 years from 1920 to 1929, inclusive, an average of 26,000,000 acres of forest land has been burned over yearly. The number of fires averaged 93,605.

To reduce this huge annual toll on the forest resources of the United States, it is essential that protection be extended. The Federal Forest Service, the National Park Service, the States, and some companies and individuals already maintain protective systems, but the area is vast, many of the fires occur in isolated regions difficult of access, and facilities for fighting the fires are often lacking.

In the more than 160,000,000 acres of national forests, there are many large areas untraversed even by trails, to say nothing of roads. If proper protection is to be given, roads and trails must be built, so that once a fire has been sighted by a ranger or a look-out, men can reach the scene of the blaze in a short time to prevent the flames from reaching such proportions that they cannot be controlled.

Hundreds of miles of these protection roads and trails are needed. In the past these have been extended as rapidly as resources permitted, but this was not fast enough to keep pace

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with the need for protection. Supplementary to the roads, many bridges will be needed.

The Government already maintains thousands of miles of telephone lines in the National Forests as an aid to fire protection. These must be extended to new look-out towers and to ranger stations which will be constructed at strategic points in the forest.

Another step in fire protection is the construction of fire lines—cleared strips from 20 to 100 feet wide, depending on local conditions, kept free of inflammable matter to prevent the passage of fires. In case it is necessary to start a backfire to subdue a conflagration, these lines serve as a base for operations.

Of importance from the standpoint of protection is the question of hazard abatement. This consists in part of clearing up burned-over areas. There are millions of acres of such regions which have been swept by disastrous fires, leaving only a skeleton forest filled with snags and dry, dead wood needing only a spark to start another conflagration. These hazards must be removed so that small seedlings that managed to survive the fire will have a chance to grow and replenish the devastated area.

Hazard abatement is necessary in green forests as well as in burned ones, because people are careless; because they throw away lighted matches and cigarettes, and pipe ashes and cigars. So along heavily traveled forest roads, at popular camp and picnic spots in the woods, this work will be done.

And more public camp grounds will be improved, with benches, tables, toilets, and garbage pits, because in the past funds have been so scarce that it has been impossible to satisfy the demands of those who want public camps on the National Forests.

Disease control, too, is of prime importance. For example, there is white pine blister rust which preys on the white pine forests in New England, the Northern Rocky Mountain and Pacific Coast regions, and the Northern Lake States. This is a fungous disease. It first infects currant and gooseberry bushes growing wild in the forest, and from these it spreads

to neighboring pines. The remedy is to remove the bushes from the vicinity and destroy them.

Then there is insect control. Numerous species of beetles bore into the bark of trees, and if unchecked do irreparable damage, running into millions of dollars. These must be eradicated. Another insect that preys particularly on the forests of the East is the gypsy moth. This, too, must be destroyed if the forest is to be saved.

There is, as has been said, work on State-owned forests under cooperative arrangements. Other work is being done on privately owned land where such work entails a public benefit. Examples are fire protection, disease and insect control, and prevention and control of the type of soil erosion which aggravates flood conditions.

Another job is the thinning out of heavy stands of timber. Just as in a flower garden you cull out the weak and sickly plants that the more desirable and sturdier plants remaining may have more room to grow, so must a stand of timber be thinned if it is to make its best development. Old, diseased, and crooked trees must be taken out. Where young trees are growing too thickly, some of them must be removed to give the others more room to grow. In other places less desirable species must make way for trees that are more valuable.

Of course, this new forest army cannot be turned loose in the woods and told to thin out a certain area. Most of them, men born and reared on city streets, not knowing one tree from another, soon would do irreparable damage if allowed to go ahead without supervision. Right here is one of the many places where the experienced forester is indispensable.

The labor performed in the forests will render a great public service by helping to put the forests of the country in a more productive condition.

The jobs are important; the building of men is also important.

Fortunately, the two go hand in hand: the men need the forests, and the forests need the men.



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