

Roosevelt's Tree Army

A Brief History of the Civilian Conservation Corps

CCC enrollees throughout the country were credited with renewing the nation's decimated forests by planting an estimated three billion trees from 1933 to 1942.

The 1932 Presidential election was more a cry for help from a desperate people near panic as it was an election in a "landslide" vote, the nation turned to Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the Democratic party searching for an end to the rampant unemployment and economic chaos that gripped the country. They weren't disappointed. Accepting the Presidential nomination on July 1, 1932, New York Governor Roosevelt planned a fight against soil erosion and declining timber resources, utilizing the unemployed of large urban areas.

Professional foresters and interested laymen raised these aims. In what would later be called "The Hundred Days," President Roosevelt revitalized the faith of the nation with several measures, one of which was the Emergency Conservation Work (ECW) Act, more commonly known as the Civilian Conservation Corps. With this action, he brought together two wasted resources, the young men and the land, in an effort to save both.

The President wasted no time: He called the 73rd Congress into Emergency Session on March 9, 1933, to bear and authorize his program. He proposed to recruit thousands of unemployed young men, enroll them in a peacetime army, and send them into battle against destruction and erosion of our natural resources. Before it was over, over three million young men engaged in a massive salvage operation, the most popular experiment of the New Deal.

The strongest reaction to the proposed CCC program was from organized labor. Its leaders feared a loss of jobs that could be filled with union members. They also looked with alarm at the involvement of the Army believing it might lead to regimentation of labor.

Senate Bill 5.598 was introduced in March 27, was through both houses of Congress on the President's desk to be signed on March 31, 1933.

Roosevelt promised that, granted emergency powers, he would have 250,000 men in camps by the end of July, 1933. The speed with which