

# Civilian Conservation Corps.

*Grades 5-6 (Adapt as Needed)*

*Prepared by the Lumber Heritage Region Educators*

## OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

Examine the Civilian Conservation Corps. program and what led to its creation and success. Acknowledge the contributions of the program to the region, state, and country and its enduring legacy.

## ACADEMIC STANDARDS

1. Geography
2. History
3. Environment & Ecology
4. Pennsylvania Core Standards for Reading/Writing in History and Social Studies
5. Connections & Conflict

## OBJECTIVES

1. Students will identify the environmental practices that created the “Pennsylvania Desert”.
2. Students will identify 3 things the CCC enrollees did to be proactive in changing the Pennsylvania Desert.
3. Students will research and identify threats to our forests in Pennsylvania today.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

1. Internet access or access to other resources for research
2. Materials for writing and illustration

## SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES

1. [https://nthardwoods.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Threats-to-the-Forest-Booklet\\_Version2\\_2022\\_Final.pdf](https://nthardwoods.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Threats-to-the-Forest-Booklet_Version2_2022_Final.pdf)
2. [https://nthardwoods.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Threats-to-the-Forest-Booklet\\_Version2\\_2022\\_Final.pdf](https://nthardwoods.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Threats-to-the-Forest-Booklet_Version2_2022_Final.pdf)
3. [https://elibrary.dcnr.pa.gov/GetDocument?docId=1738650&DocName=PennsylvaniaCCCamp\\_Map.pdf](https://elibrary.dcnr.pa.gov/GetDocument?docId=1738650&DocName=PennsylvaniaCCCamp_Map.pdf)

## ACTIVITY

1. Read the CCC Story and answer the follow-along questions.
2. Students will illustrate 3 factors that contributed to the Pennsylvania Desert and include a brief description of what they drew.
3. Students will illustrate 3 things the CCC enrollees did to combat these factors and include a brief description of what they drew.
4. Students will research and discuss what the main threats to our forests in Pennsylvania are today. If the CCC program existed today, what might they do to combat these threats? What can students do?

## ASSESSMENT

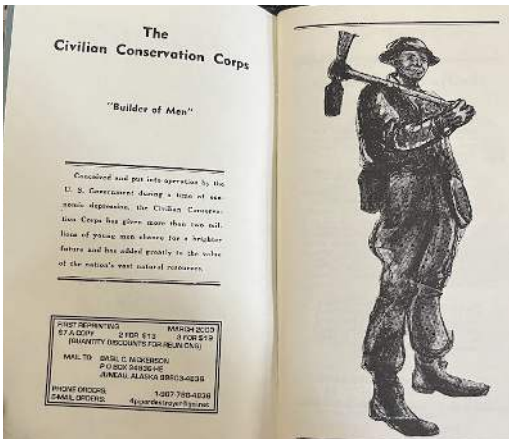
*Steps to check for student understanding*

1. 3-2-1
  - a. Students will write three things they learned.
  - b. Students will write two things they want to know more about.
  - c. Students will write one question they have.

## The Civilian Conservation Corps.

Unsustainable logging and agricultural practices throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries had left many parts of the country in ecological distress. This damaged and limited the natural resources in America. States like Pennsylvania that had once been heavily forested had been harvested to support the nation's expansion and industrial growth.

Once these resources were gone the areas that relied on those industries suffered. By the 1920s the wild region of North Central Pennsylvania, once known for its immense old growth forests, had been nicknamed the "Pennsylvania Desert". Years of over-logging followed by wildfires, flooding, and erosion had left hillsides stripped of their forests and value with limited successful regrowth.



In 1929 an economic crisis loomed over the United States. The crash of the stock market launched America into the era commonly referred to as the "Great Depression". Many banks, factories, and businesses closed and many people were left making very little or unemployed. Natural disasters and limited natural resources exacerbated the situation.

President Roosevelt sought a solution; by establishing a program for young men ages 17-15 and veterans, and providing them with training, education, friendships, and jobs. The young men worked with Departments of Agriculture and Forests & Waters under the leadership of the US Army to conserve and renew the country's natural resources, especially forests. This was called the Civilian Conservation Corps. (CCC) program.



The CCCs planted over 60 million trees in Pennsylvania. Across the country, these men planted around 3 billion trees. This is what gave them the nickname "Roosevelt's Tree Army".

Pennsylvania had the second highest number of CCC camps (~151). Sites for camps were often those that had once been old sawmills or leftover land from logging companies. Over half of the CCC camps of Pennsylvania were within the area included in the Lumber Heritage Region. The enrollees built and lived at the camps.

Some of the work the men did aside from planting trees included other forest management jobs. Projects like soil erosion control and construction projects. The CCCs also were responsible for wildfire prevention and control. They helped with local natural disasters including fires and floods.

Recreation is still a valued product of healthy forests and our state park system in Pennsylvania relies on a lot of the CCC's work today. They built buildings, roads, picnic areas, firepits, pavilions, and even swimming pools.

The CCC program lasted until 1942, when the country became focused on the World War II effort. The work of the CCC's is still visible all around us today.

Questions about the Civilian Conservation Corps.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Read the Story of the CCCs and answer the following questions.

1. What were two factors that led to the creation of the CCC program?

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2. What was the nickname of the area of Pennsylvania now recognized as the Lumber Heritage Region in the 1920's? \_\_\_\_\_

3. What year was the CCC program started? \_\_\_\_\_

4. What year did the CCC program end? \_\_\_\_\_

5. List 3 things the CCCs worked on...

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6. What major event ended the CCC program? \_\_\_\_\_

7. CCC camps were often placed over old logging sites, based on what you know, why do you think this occurred?

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