



# News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
March 26, 2008

CONTACT: Roy Stearns  
(916) 654-7538

## 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of CCC – Civilian Conservation Corps

### **Photography Exhibit Honoring 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Now On Display at Governor's Office, State Capitol**

To mark the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), California State Parks is sponsoring a photography exhibit just outside the Governor's Office in the State Capitol. Featuring rare historic photos, the exhibit tells the story of how the young men and World War I veterans of the CCC built the roads, trails, campgrounds, and visitor centers of the state park system in the signature "park rustic" architectural style.

"This exhibit shows the amazing handiwork that is the very foundation of our State park system today," said State Parks Director Ruth Coleman. "Their accomplishments are all the more inspiring when you consider what they managed to achieve using hand tools – picks and shovels – while working in challenging terrain under difficult conditions. They would be proud to know that most of their creations are still enjoyed today by millions of visitors to California State Parks."

Seventy-five years ago this month, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt created the Civilian Conservation Corps. Known as "Roosevelt's Tree Army," the men of the CCC not only fought fires and planted trees across the nation, they also built the national and state park systems that we still use today.

The exhibit shows that although the CCC ended with America's entry into World War II, its spirit lives on in today's California Conservation Corps and the 11 local conservation corps throughout the state. These modern-day corps offer California's young people the opportunity to learn life's lessons through hard work and public service, while protecting our natural resources.

The exhibit is on the first floor of the State Capitol, outside the Governor's Office. It will be on display through April 25. The State Capitol is open daily from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. There is no admission fee.

California State Parks will also commemorate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the CCC with a special web site, [www.parks.ca.gov/cc](http://www.parks.ca.gov/cc) and a brochure highlighting the most outstanding CCC structures in the state park system. Brochures will be available throughout the state, and can be obtained by calling (916) 651-9523.

There will also be the following special events commemorating the CCC anniversary (more information can be found at [www.parks.ca.gov/cc](http://www.parks.ca.gov/cc)):

- Mt. Tamalpais State Park on April 12;
- La Purisima Mission State Historic Park on April 26;
- Pfeiffer Burns State Park on July 16; and
- Cuyamaca Rancho State Park on October 11.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) was the most popular of the New Deal programs created by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt to provide relief and speed recovery from the Great Depression. From 1933 to 1942, the CCC put some two million young men to work on a massive program in America's parks and forests. Roads and trails, campsites and amphitheaters, social halls and visitor centers numbered among the many features constructed by the CCC that provided the public with unprecedented access to the nation's natural and historic treasures.

California's state park system benefited greatly from the CCC, who worked under the direction of the National Park Service. CCC crews built the roads, trails, and campgrounds in northern California's redwood parks, as well as the picnic tables and shade ramadas in southern California's beaches and desert parks. Some of the monumental CCC-built features in California state parks include the Forest Theater and Nature Lodge in Big Basin State Park, the Summit Museum at Mount Diablo State Park, and the Mountain Theater at Mount Tamalpais State Park.

But the CCC was more than just a make work program. FDR envisioned it as a way to restore the spirit of a nation hard pressed by the unrelenting economic downturn. As FDR put it in his radio address of July 17, 1933,

*"It is time for each and every one of us to cast away self-destroying, nation-destroying efforts to get something for nothing, and to appreciate that satisfying reward and safe reward come only through honest work."*

The CCC offered the enrollees a renewed sense of dignity and hope for the future. They were not only earning a living, they were doing something important for their country, and they knew it.

###