

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

RABIDEAU CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS (CCC) CAMP

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United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Rabideau Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Camp

Other Name/Site Number:

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: Off Beltrami County Highway 39

Not for publication:

City/Town: Taylor Township (Chippewa National Forest)

Vicinity: Blackduck

State: MN

County: Beltrami

Code: 007

Zip Code: 56630

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Private: ___

Public-Local: ___

Public-State: ___

Public-Federal: X

Category of Property

Building(s): ___

District: X

Site: ___

Structure: ___

Object: ___

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

12

2

3

17

Noncontributing

4 buildings

___ sites

2 structures

1 objects

7 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 17

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing:

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4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ____ nomination ____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Signature of Certifying Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

- Entered in the National Register
- Determined eligible for the National Register
- Determined not eligible for the National Register
- Removed from the National Register
- Other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

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6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: DOMESTIC

Sub: camp

Current: RECREATION AND CULTURE

Sub: museum
outdoor recreation

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: OTHER: New Deal Work Camp

MATERIALS:

Foundation: wood, concrete

Walls: wood

Roof: asphalt

Other:

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Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

The Rabideau Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Camp is located in the Chippewa National Forest, one-half mile west of Beltrami County Highway 39, six miles south of the city of Blackduck, in north central Minnesota. The camp is situated on a rural tract of land comprising 111.65 acres, which represents the federal government's original land acquisition for the camp dating from 1934. An unpaved gravel road enters the camp from the south, although the camp itself is screened by vegetation until the core camp area is reached. The camp is sited on a low rise of land between Carls Lake and Benjamin Lake in picturesque stands of paper birch, many of which predate the construction of the camp.

The vegetation surrounding the camp consists of second growth forest. In addition to the dominant birch, other species within the over story include basswood, ash, burr oak, and elm. The central portion of the camp, as well as the current picnic area, is mowed, while the remaining areas, such as the Service Yard and the Ball Field, consist of grass and low herbaceous plants. Moderately dense forest vegetation surrounds the core camp area. Three cedar hedgerows, believed to have been planted by the CCC, are also located at the camp; one just south of the Hospital, one along the eastern edge of the entrance road, and the third just south of the Education Building.¹

The original site plan located the principal common-use buildings at the center of the camp on a north-south axis. Barracks and other support buildings are located to the east and west. The buildings are generally large, rectangular frame buildings with multi-pane hopper windows and covered with low-pitch gable roofs, typical of CCC camp architecture. The buildings form a uniform, cohesive collection created by their simple and repetitious design, material, and paint scheme. The camp's original unpaved road system forms a central loop providing convenient access to the majority of the buildings. Lake views exist from the developed areas of the camp.

The property has survived with relatively little change since its initial occupation by the CCC Camp F-50 from 1935-1941. Beginning in 1946, the camp was leased to the University of Illinois for summer classes from the Department of Civil Engineering and later the Department of Forestry. The lease arrangement remained in effect until 1973. During that time, the camp was affected by some demolition, damage by fire, and minor alteration of a few interiors. The Rabideau Camp has remained in the ownership of the U.S. Forest Service since its creation, and is now open to the public for interpretation. During the summer months, former CCC enrollees are available for guided tours. The CCC Company 708 held its first annual reunion at the camp in 1970, a tradition that continues to this day.

The historic district includes twelve contributing buildings, three contributing structures, one contributing object, and two contributing sites. All contributing resources were constructed between 1935-41. Four non-contributing buildings and two non-contributing structures are also included.

In the following descriptions, the number in parentheses represents the number assigned to the building by the U.S. Forest Service. This system applies to both existing buildings and the camp's original buildings that are no longer extant. The Forest Service has assigned numbers 1-29. Additional numbers have been assigned to resources not included in the Forest Service's numbering system. A map of the camp is keyed to this system. At least two other numbering systems had been used at the camp. However, for the purposes of clarity, only the contemporary number is referenced.

¹Charles Wingard, "Vegetative Management Plan for Rabideau Historic Site/Picnic Area," 1984.

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Forest Service Officer's Quarters² (#2)

The Forest Service Officer's Quarters is a one-story, rectangular frame building with overall dimensions of 20' by 62'. The building is covered with shiplap siding painted a dark green and is capped with a low-pitch, trussed, gable roof covered with green rolled asphalt. A log post foundation supports the building and consists of three sets of eight, evenly-spaced posts which are positioned along the north and south exterior side walls and the building's central axis. The posts are exposed along both the south and west sides due to the building's position within a shallow hillside. The principal entrance is located on the west end wall and features a projecting entry covered by a gable roof. Three steps rise to a small porch with wooden railings that extends from the entry. A second entrance is centered on the east end wall. Window openings consist of nine-light hopper windows that are typically hinged at the base. Single windows flank each entrance door and eight windows are spaced along the north wall. Three, square-shaped, nine-light windows are grouped together as a single unit on the western portion of the south wall. The remainder of this side features five evenly spaced single windows. One single six-light window is placed in each gable end. The trim around all doors and window openings, as well as the corner boards, consists of plain wood planks painted white. Three metal chimneys project from the north slope of the roof.

The interior includes a 20' by 15' day room to the west with hardwood floors, vertical knotty-pine paneling, and a varnished plywood ceiling with a tent-like appearance that is achieved by angling a plywood section toward each of the north and south sidewalls. The room includes a free-standing wood-burning stove. A central hallway extends from the day room to the east entrance. Six bedrooms open off the hallway as well as toilet facilities. Each bedroom features one wall of built-in storage including closets, drawers, and cupboards. Walls and ceilings are finished similarly to the day room although the ceilings are flat and the flooring appears to be plywood.

The Forest Service Officer's Quarters provided living space for the Camp Superintendent, Engineer, and Foremen, who were responsible for supervising the work projects undertaken by the CCC, and any visiting Forest Service inspection teams.

The current arrangement of the interior spaces apparently occurred in circa 1939. The major changes appear to have involved extending the day room the full width of the building and moving the principal entrance from the center of the south wall to the west end. The relocation of the entrance is verified by the oldest known site plan of the camp that clearly indicates the entrance along the south wall as well as the presence of wood infill that marks the original entrance. The toilet facilities may have been added at this time as well. The building was also used for staff as well as guest quarters when the University of Illinois occupied the site.³

Barracks (#3)

The Barracks is a one-story, rectangular frame building with overall dimensions of 20' by 75'. The building is covered with shiplap siding painted a dark green and is capped with a low-pitch, trussed, gable roof covered with green rolled asphalt. The north facade features an off-center entrance positioned along the eastern portion

²Descriptions for the resources at the camp are derived in part from the Historic American Buildings Survey of the Rabideau CCC Camp (HABS No. MN-147), Rolf Anderson, Historian.

³"Rabideau Camp F-50"; site plan of the camp ca. 1936, University Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Civil Engineering Subject File Record Series 11/5/1; U.S. Forest Service, "Program of Management for Rabideau Historic Site," July 1978; U.S. Forest Service, undated history of the Rabideau Camp, Rabideau Camp file, Forest Supervisor's Office, Cass Lake, Minnesota.

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of the wall. Two nine-light hopper windows are placed to the left of the entrance and five evenly-spaced hopper windows are placed to the right. This arrangement is repeated in the reverse on the south side with the entrance door located along the western portion of the wall. The east end wall includes one nine-light hopper window positioned to the south and one six-light window centered in the gable end. The west end wall repeats this arrangement but with the window opening located to the north. The trim around all doors and window openings, as well as the corner boards, consists of plain wood planks painted white. Two metal chimneys project from the roof, one from each of the north and south slopes.

The interior of the Barracks consists of one large room with a horizontal 1" by 6" wood wainscot to the sill level and fiberboard above. The building's truss system is completely exposed although three posts have been added along the center of the room for additional support. There are several large tables in the room.

The Barracks originally housed CCC enrollees and was later used as a classroom by the University of Illinois. While in use by the University of Illinois, an entrance on each end wall was infilled and relocated to the north and south facades. One window opening was also infilled on each end wall. Several structural problems have developed as seen in the severely buckled floors of the interior as well as the sagging roofline. Either the foundation is failing or portions of the building may be resting directly on the ground. The building is in fair condition.

Education Building (#4)

The Education Building is a large U-shaped structure with the principal center portion of the building positioned on the crest of a hill and the two projecting wings extending to the south above the surrounding terrain. The dimensions of the rectangular main building are 20' by 75', while the east wing is 20' long and 20' wide, and the larger west wing is 40' long by 20' wide. The building is covered with shiplap siding painted a dark green and is capped with a low-pitch, trussed, gable roof covered with green rolled asphalt. A log post foundation supports the building. With its hillside location and rather unusual size for a building associated with a CCC camp, the Education Building is the most imposing structure at the Rabideau Camp.

The east end wall of the principal section of the building features an entrance door to the south which is covered with a gabled canopy and two nine-light hopper windows positioned to the right. The walk leading to the entry consists of a large piece of slate. Eight nine-light windows are spaced along the north wall while an entrance door flanked by single windows is located on the west end wall. A stairway that descended to the ground has been removed. The south side includes four window openings that open into the base of the U. The West Wing features four windows on the west wall, two windows on the south end wall, a central entrance flanked by two windows to each side on the east facade. A stairway that descended to the ground has been removed. The East Wing includes four windows on the west wall, two on the south, and an entrance door on the east facade with two windows positioned to the south. One six-light hopper window is placed in each of the building's four gable ends. The trim around all doors and window openings, as well as the corner boards, consists of plain wood planks painted white.

The principal entrance, located in the east end wall, leads to a short hallway with the library positioned to the left, in the east wing, and a room which appears to have been an office to the right. Directly ahead is the large classroom, which includes a doorway to the west wing along the south wall. Interior surfaces include pine paneling in the office, a horizontal 1" by 6" wood wainscot to the sill level in the West Wing with fiberboard above, and plywood paneling in the large classroom. Like the Forest Service Officer's Quarters, both the main section of the building and the library feature plywood ceilings with a tent-like appearance that is achieved by

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angling a plywood panel toward each sidewall.

When the Rabideau Camp was first constructed, the Education Building only consisted of its rectangular principal section, with the same dimensions as the standard barracks at the camp. Since it was described as a barracks on the oldest known site plan, it is possible the building may have initially served that purpose, but it is known to have served as the camp's Education Building beginning in 1936. The CCC later added the two wings to the building, probably sometime in 1936, which is apparently indicative of the increasingly important role that education played at the camp. The expanded building included classroom space, a library, and a workshop. The camp's Educational Advisor conducted educational and training classes.

When the University of Illinois first utilized the camp, the Education Building continued to provide classroom space. The large tables and benches found in the classroom were probably built by the University in circa 1947. In time, the use shifted to recreation. Films were shown in the classroom and by 1950 a canteen was installed in the west wing, which had been the workshop. It is also evident that the principal entrance located in the east end wall was once centrally located but at one time its location was exchanged with the adjacent window opening. Wood infill clearly marks the location of the original doorway. This change probably occurred in 1936 based on a description of the building by Clair T. Rollings, the camp's Educational Advisor. Rollings also noted that the slate for the walkway came from old pool tables.⁴

By 1990, the Education Building was experiencing a number of structural problems, including the apparent failure of the foundation along the west façade of the west wing. The Forest Service installed cribbing beneath the wing in order to prevent collapse. However, the building has been completely restored over a several year period through a joint effort of the U.S. Forest Service, the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota, and the City of Blackduck. The U.S. Forest Service is in the process of installing a museum in the building that interprets the history of the CCC and the Rabideau Camp.

Barracks (#5)

The Barracks is a one-story, rectangular frame building with overall dimensions of 20' by 75' that is nearly identical to the Barracks to the south identified as Building #3. The building is covered with shiplap siding painted a dark green and is capped with a low-pitch, trussed, gable roof covered with green rolled asphalt. The north facade features an off-center entrance positioned along the eastern portion of the wall. Two nine-light hopper windows are placed to the left of the entrance and five evenly-spaced hopper windows are placed to the right. A small four-light window is located immediately to the left of the entrance. This arrangement is repeated in the reverse on the south wall with the entrance door located along the western portion of the facade, although the four-light window has been omitted. The east end wall includes one nine-light hopper window positioned to the south and one six-light window centered in the gable end. The west end wall repeats this arrangement but with the window opening located to the north. The trim around all doors and window openings, as well as the corner boards, consists of plain wood planks painted white. Two metal chimneys project from the roof, one from each of the north and south slopes. The building is probably supported by a log post foundation but it almost appears to be resting directly on the ground.

The interior of the Barracks consists of one large room with a horizontal 1" by 6" wood wainscot to the sill

⁴Ibid.; "Rabideau Camp F-50;" University of Illinois, "Camp Rabideau" site plan, August 1947, and "Classroom Building" drawing, 6 April 1947, University Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Civil Engineering Subject File Record Series 11/5/1.

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level and fiberboard above. The building's truss system is completely exposed. A wood partition divides the building into two spaces, one room at the east end and a second room approximately twice as large to the west.

The Barracks originally housed CCC enrollees and was later used as a classroom by the University of Illinois. While in use by the University of Illinois, an entrance on each end wall was infilled and relocated to the north and south sides. One window opening was also infilled on each end wall. The University also added the interior partition.⁵ The building is in fair condition.

Barracks (#6)

The Barracks is a one-story, rectangular frame building with overall dimensions of 20' by 75'. The building overlooks Carls Lake, which is approximately 30' to the north. The building is covered with shiplap siding painted a dark green and is capped with a low-pitch, trussed, gable roof covered with green rolled asphalt. A log post foundation supports the building. Two entrance doors are positioned on the south facade with four evenly spaced nine-light hopper windows positioned between them and two windows located to each side. Each end wall includes two nine-light windows and one six-light window in the gable end. Ten windows are located on the north wall as well as a small 4' by 4' projection from the center of the wall that contains a water heater. Three deteriorated steps ascend to a plank door to gain access to the space. The trim around all doors and window openings, as well as the corner boards, consists of plain wood planks painted white. Four metal chimneys project from the south slope of the roof, just off the ridge. The entrance door to the west is deteriorated.

Although originally consisting of a single open space, the interior was remodeled in 1947 to create four apartments. The building is divided in half, with two apartments in each section, and each section has its own entrance door. Each doorway leads to a small foyer with doors to the left and right for each apartment. Each unit consists of a day room to the south and two bedrooms to the north that open directly into the day room. An interior hallway shared by both units leads to a common bath. Also in 1947, the centrally located entrance doors in each end wall were infilled, two doors were installed on the south facade, and an addition was made on the north wall to provide space for a water heater. The materials used in the addition appear identical to those of the original structure, apparently because they were salvaged from another building at the camp. The units were used by staff, and were designed in particular for family members who came to live at the camp during the school's summer program.⁶ The building is in fair condition.

Recreation Hall (#7)

The Recreation Hall is a one-story, rectangular frame building with overall dimensions of 20' by 75' whose present appearance is nearly identical to the Barracks identified as Building #6. The building is covered with shiplap siding painted a dark green and is capped with a low-pitch, trussed, gable roof covered with green rolled asphalt. A log post foundation supports the building. Two entrance doors are positioned on the south facade with four evenly spaced nine-light hopper windows positioned between them and two windows located to each side. Each end wall includes two nine-light windows and one six-light window in the gable end. The window

⁵“Rabideau Camp F-50”; “Memorandum to Students,” 15 June 1949, University Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Civil Engineering Subject File Record Series 11/5/1.

⁶“Rabideau Camp F-50”; undated and untitled floor plans for remodeling, University Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Civil Engineering Subject File Record Series 11/5/1; W. C. Huntington, head of the Department of Civil Engineering, College of Engineering, University of Illinois, to Marvin Smith, Forest Supervisor, Chippewa National Forest, 5 September 1946, Rabideau Camp file, Iron Range Research Center, Chisholm, Minnesota.

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to the south on the west wall has been altered so that it is lower than typical window height. Nine windows are located on the north wall as well as a small 4' by 4' projection near the center that contains a water heater. The trim around all doors and window openings, as well as the corner boards, consists of plain wood planks painted white. Four metal chimneys project from the south slope of the roof, just off the ridge.

CCC enrollees used the Recreation Hall after field work was done and the evening meal had been served. Furnishings included pool and ping-pong tables, sports equipment, a movie projector, candy and pop machines, and a barber's chair. A canteen was also included which sold items such as razor blades, bar soap, and toothpaste.

The interior was remodeled by the University of Illinois in 1946 to create four apartments. The building was divided in half, with two apartments in each section, and each section with its own entrance door. Each doorway leads to a small foyer with doors to the left and right for each apartment. Each unit consists of a day room to the south and two bedrooms to the north that open directly into the day room. An interior hallway shared by both units leads to a common bath. Two entrance doors on the south facade and one on the west end wall were infilled, two new doors were installed on the south wall, and a small addition was made on the north side to provide space for a water heater. The materials used in the addition appear identical to those of the original structure, apparently because they were salvaged from another building at the camp. The units were used by University staff, and were designed in particular for family members who came to live at the camp during the school's summer program. The Recreation Building is in poor condition.⁷

Barracks (Mess Hall) (#8)

The Barracks (Mess Hall) is a one-story, T-shaped, frame building located on a hillside at the northern edge of the camp. It includes a 20' by 86' dining hall and an extension to the south for the kitchen. The kitchen wing consists of a 20' by 24' section positioned at the intersection of the T followed by an 8' by 13' section. The building is covered with shiplap siding painted a dark green and is capped with a low-pitch, trussed, cross-gable roof covered with green rolled asphalt. A gable-roofed ridge ventilator projects from the roof of the kitchen. The dining hall includes a central entrance door on the north facade and doors on each end wall, although stairways are no longer in place to descend to the ground. Paired six-light windows are located in each gable end while nineteen nine-light hopper windows are spaced along the sides, although the windows are somewhat smaller than those found in the other buildings at the camp. The kitchen wing includes an entrance door to the south, paired nine-light windows on the west walls, and five windows on the south and east sides. Small louvered vents are positioned on both surfaces of the southeast corner of the kitchen wing. A projection along the east sidewall, at the intersection of the T, includes another entrance door. The trim around all doors and window openings, as well as the corner boards, consists of plain wood planks painted white. In addition, vertical wood strips are spaced at intervals on all sides, a detail not found on any other building at the camp. Five metal chimneys project from the roof, four from the north slope and one from the south slope. The building is supported by a log post foundation.

The interior of the dining hall features plywood to the sill level with fiberboard above, an exposed truss system,

⁷Ibid.; U.S. Forest Service, undated history of the Rabideau Camp, Rabideau Camp file, Forest Supervisor's Office, Cass Lake, Minnesota.

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and a number of tables. The west end of the dining hall is partitioned off to create a separate room. A long serving counter is positioned at the intersection of the dining hall and the kitchen. The kitchen includes a walk-in freezer, a gas stove, sinks, various counters, a chopping block, and storage space.

According to the oldest known site plan of the camp, the original Mess Hall built in 1935 was located immediately to the south of the present building and was nearly a reverse image of the current structure with the leg of the T extending to the north. However, when the University of Illinois was first negotiating with the Forest Service for the use of the camp in 1945, correspondence clearly indicates that both the original Mess Hall and Wash House had been "recently" destroyed in a fire. The University indicated it would need to rebuild these structures, and thus it would appear certain that both were destroyed after the CCC vacated the camp, otherwise they would have necessarily been rebuilt or installed in an existing structure. To complicate this history, the oldest known site plan of the camp includes the original Mess Hall, but nothing is shown on the site of the present building. However, when the University of Illinois was provided with an updated copy of this site plan by the Forest Service in 1945, the building was penciled in and it is likely it had been constructed by 1938. The University later revised the site plan in 1946 and described the building as a "barracks" although only the rectangular northern portion of the building existed at that time. The CCC enrollees have also referred to the building as such. Another site plan referred to the building as a "portable barracks." Other references describe the building as a bakery for the nearby Mess Hall. The University also called the building the "northern barracks" when they decided to convert the building to a mess hall. As part of the conversion process, the Oil House from the service yard, a 20' by 24' structure, was moved and attached to the barracks and formed the first portion of the leg of the T. During the planning process, the University requested information about the layouts of other mess halls at CCC camps in the Chippewa National Forest in order to plan the space. In fact, kitchen equipment from the mess hall at the CCC camp at Remer was transferred to the Rabideau Camp, and the refrigeration unit from the Remer camp may have been installed as well. The building was restored by the Forest Service in 1986 and is in excellent condition.⁸

Barracks (#9)

The Barracks is a one-story, rectangular frame building with overall dimensions of 20' by 75'. The building is covered with shiplap siding painted a dark green and is capped with a low-pitch, trussed, gable roof covered with green rolled asphalt. The building is supported by a log post foundation. Eight nine-light hopper windows are spaced along both the north and south walls. The east and west facades feature a central entrance door flanked by nine-light windows and one six-light window in the gable. The trim around all doors and window openings, as well as the corner boards, consists of plain wood planks painted white. A 4' square frame addition at the southeast corner of the building was constructed to contain a hot water heater. The addition continues the original roofline. Three metal chimneys project from the roof, one from each of the north and south slopes, and one from the addition.

The interior of the Barracks consists of one large room with a horizontal 1" by 6" wood wainscot to the sill level and fiberboard above. The building's truss system is completely exposed. Two shelves have been installed along the sidewalls. Wash room facilities are located at the east end of the building with four sinks

⁸“Rabideau Camp F-50”; site plan of the camp ca. 1936, site plan of the camp dated 10 October 1945, “Memorandum Concerning the Summer Surveying Camp,” dated 8 October 1945, University Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Civil Engineering Subject File Record Series 11/5/1; Correspondence between the U.S. Forest Service and the University of Illinois dated 13 October 1945, 8 December 1945, 17 January 1946, a copy of the original “Special Use Permit,” dated 31 May 1946, granted to the University of Illinois for the use of the Rabideau Camp attached to correspondence dated 3 January 1950, Rabideau Camp file, Iron Range Research Center, Chisholm, Minnesota. U.S. Forest Service, “Program of Management for Rabideau Historic Site,” July 1978.

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and two toilets in a small room to the north and showers in the room to the south, both of which are separated by a hallway that leads to the east entrance.

The Barracks originally housed CCC enrollees and was later utilized for the same purpose by the University of Illinois which used the building as a student dormitory. The University installed the wash room facilities in 1946 after apparently deciding not to construct a central wash house. The addition for the water heater may have occurred at that time but it is likely that hot water was provided to all the student dormitories from a large water heater in Building #14 until 1952. Regardless of the date of the addition, the materials are identical to those of the original camp buildings because salvaged materials from dismantled structures were generally used for any remodeling which occurred. The building remains in particularly original, although deteriorated, condition.⁹

Barracks (#10)

The Barracks is a one-story, rectangular frame building with overall dimensions of 20' by 75' located at the western perimeter of the camp just west of Benjamin Lake. The building is covered with shiplap siding painted a dark green and is capped with a low-pitch, trussed, gable roof covered with green rolled asphalt. Eight nine-light hopper windows are spaced along both the north and south walls. The east and west facades feature a central entrance door flanked by nine-light windows and one six-light window in the gable. The trim around all doors and window openings, as well as the corner boards, consists of plain wood planks painted white. A 4' square frame addition at the southwest corner of the building was constructed to contain a hot water heater. The addition continues the original roofline. Three metal chimneys project from the roof, one from each of the north and south slopes, and one from the addition. The building is probably supported by a log post foundation but it almost appears to be resting directly on the ground.

The interior of the Barracks consists of one large room with a horizontal 1" by 6" wood wainscot to the sill level and fiberboard above. The building's truss system is completely exposed. Two shelves have been installed along the sidewalls. Wash room facilities are located at the west end of the building with four sinks and two toilets in a small room to the north and showers in the room to the south, both of which are separated by a hallway that leads to the west entrance.

The Barracks originally housed CCC enrollees and was later utilized for the same purpose by the University of Illinois which used the building as a student dormitory. The University installed the wash room facilities in 1946 after apparently deciding not to construct a central wash house. The addition for the water heater may have occurred at that time but it is likely that hot water was provided to all the student dormitories from a large water heater in Building #14 until 1952. Regardless of the date of the addition, the materials are identical to those of the original camp buildings because salvaged materials from dismantled structures were generally used for any remodeling which occurred. The building remains in particularly original condition although it is in very deteriorated state and experiencing certain structural problems as evidenced by its uneven roofline. Barracks #10 is nearly identical to Barracks #9 except the washroom facilities are located at the opposite end of the building.¹⁰

⁹"Rabideau Camp F-50"; "Memorandum Concerning the Summer Surveying Camp," 1 December 1945; "Memorandum to Students," 15 June 1949, University Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Civil Engineering Subject File Record Series 11/5/1; Milton O. Schmidt, Professor of Civil Engineering, Emertius, University of Illinois, to the U.S. Forest Service, Chippewa National Forest, 5 August 1985, Rabideau Camp file, Forest Supervisor's Office, Cass Lake, Minnesota.

¹⁰Ibid.

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Barracks (#11)

The Barracks is a one-story, rectangular frame building with overall dimensions of 20' by 75'. The building is covered with shiplap siding painted a dark green and is capped with a low-pitch, trussed, gable roof covered with green rolled asphalt. The building is supported by a log post foundation. Eight nine-light hopper windows are spaced along both the north and south walls. The east and west facades feature a central entrance door flanked by nine-light windows and one six-light window in the gable. The trim around all doors and window openings, as well as the corner boards, consists of plain wood planks painted green. Four metal chimneys project from the roof, two from each of the north and south slopes.

The interior of the Barracks consists of one large room with a horizontal 1" by 6" wood wainscot to the sill level and fiberboard above. The building's truss system is completely exposed. A wood-burning barrel stove is located in the center. Two shelves have been installed along the sidewalls. Wash room facilities are located at the east end of the building with four sinks and two toilets in a small room to the north and showers in the room to the south, both of which are separated by a hallway that leads to the east entrance.

The Barracks originally housed CCC enrollees and was later utilized for the same purpose by the University of Illinois which used the building as a student dormitory. The University installed the wash room facilities in 1946 after apparently deciding not to construct a central wash house. This building is nearly identical to Building #9, located immediately to the north. The Barracks was restored by the Forest Service in 1986 and is in excellent condition.¹¹

Army Officer's Quarters (#13)

The Army Officer's Quarters is a one-story, rectangular frame building with overall dimensions of 20' by 42'. The building is covered with shiplap siding painted a dark green and is capped with a low-pitch, trussed, gable roof covered with green rolled asphalt. The building is supported by a log post foundation. The west facing principal facade features an off center entry, with a small porch with wood railings, which is flanked by single nine-light hopper windows. One six-light window is positioned in the gable end. The north wall includes four nine-light windows and the east end wall features two nine-light windows and one six-light window in the gable. A multi-paned French-style entrance door is centered on the south wall with two windows evenly spaced to either side. The trim around all doors and window openings, as well as the corner boards, consists of plain wood planks painted green. Three metal chimneys project from the roof, all from the south slope.

Beginning at the west entrance, the interior includes an entry room, a bathroom, and a day room, all located along the south wall. Four bedrooms are positioned along the north sidewall. The wall surfaces in the entrance room and bedroom located at the west end of the building are finished with varnished plywood while all the remaining rooms, with the exception of the bath, feature knotty-pine paneling. All ceilings are finished with plywood although those in the day room and three bedrooms to the east are characterized by a tent-like appearance that is achieved by angling a plywood section toward each of the north and south sidewalls. All floors are hardwood although the day room is covered with brown linoleum.

The Army Officer's Quarters was used to house the Camp Commander, Second Officer, and Camp Physician. The interior was remodeled in circa 1939. An historic photograph shows an arbor over the path leading to the

¹¹Ibid.

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south entrance. The University of Illinois used the building for staff quarters. The building was restored by the Forest Service in 1986 and is in excellent condition.¹²

Water Tower Base (#15A)

Four concrete piers which formed the structural base of the camp's water tower are located just to the south of the Wash House. Forming a 16' square, each corner pier is 2.5' square and approximately 1.5' high. Each of the outside edges is slightly tapered.

From each pier rose heavy timber posts, with three stages of cross-bracing, which supported a platform with railings that held a redwood tank. By 1960 the University had removed the tank and superstructure when pressurized water tanks were installed. The University had previously noted there had been some structural problems with the timber posts and a ladder that allowed access to the platform. The Water Tower Base is considered a contributing structure.¹³

Hospital (#17)

The Hospital is a one-story, rectangular frame building with overall dimensions of 20' by 54' located on a hillside with a gentle slope to the south. The building is covered with shiplap siding painted a dark green and is capped with a low-pitch, trussed, gable roof covered with green rolled asphalt. The building is supported by a log post foundation. The principal entrance is located on the north end of the east facade and includes a small porch and railings. One nine-light hopper window is positioned to the left of the doorway and one six-light window is located in the gable end. The west facade includes a central entrance, although there are no longer steps in place to access the entry, flanking nine-light windows and one six-light window in the gable end. Both the north and south sidewalls feature seven windows spaced along the walls. The trim around all doors and window openings, as well as the corner boards, consists of plain wood planks painted green. Two metal chimneys project from the roof, one from each of the north and south slopes.

A waiting room is entered from the east doorway with an examination room to the south. A central hallway with a unique tunnel vault executed in plywood extends from the waiting room to a large ward at the west end of the building. A bath, a staff bedroom, an isolation room, and one additional room open off the hallway. A groin vault is positioned at the intersection of the hallway and the entries to the bath and staff bedroom. The walls and ceilings throughout the hospital feature varnished plywood. The ward features a ceiling that gently curves as it meets the north and south side walls, several recessed lights, and decorative vertical wood strips below the windows. Two of the corner surfaces in the ward are rounded, although this detail was somewhat obscured by subsequent changes. Other features include a built-in dresser with flanking closets in the staff bedroom.

Both the CCC and the University of Illinois used this building as a hospital. The oldest known site plan for the camp shows the principal entrance door located at the east end of the north facade and evidence of this doorway is still apparent from the wood infill. The entrance was then shifted to the east end wall. Other changes include

¹²"Rabideau Camp F-50"; U.S. Forest Service, undated history of the Rabideau Camp, Rabideau Camp file, Forest Supervisor's Office, Cass Lake, Minnesota.

¹³University of Illinois, photograph "R-1" 1945, University Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Civil Engineering Subject File Record Series 11/5/1; Ray Hubbard internal memorandum to Forest Supervisor 14 April 1960, Rabideau Camp file, Forest Supervisor's Office, Cass Lake, Minnesota.

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shifting the wall between the waiting room and the examination room to the south so that the central hallway could be accessed from the waiting room. The original L-shaped ward was also modified by the construction of another room that gave the ward a squared appearance. This change also included the installation of a door from the hallway to the ward and together they obscured the curved corner surfaces. A file from the University of Illinois contains a floor plan of the hospital prior to the interior changes, which probably occurred in 1939. The building was restored by the Forest Service in 1986 and is in excellent condition.¹⁴

Service Yard

A large clearing on the west side of the camp identifies the location of the Service Yard. Low grasses and vegetation characterize the clearing. The Service Yard contained nine buildings historically. These buildings are no longer standing, however, structural features are visible throughout the site. These include concrete slabs and poured concrete structures that may have provided support to structures such as loading docks. For example, a concrete feature approximately 5' square and 3.5' high remains from the loading dock of the Tool House (#19). Another concrete feature is a U-shaped structure with poured concrete walls about 3.5' high. The sidewalls are about 6' long and the end wall is about 3.5' wide with a small concrete section projecting above the surrounding walls. It may have been associated with the Oil House (#22). Other concrete features appear to be associated with the two Storage Garages (#23 & #24) and the Equipment Shed (#26). It is likely that other structural features exist below grade. The Service Yard is considered a contributing site.

The Service Yard originally included the following buildings that are no longer extant¹⁵:

Storage Garage (#18) - This 22' by 44' building was used by the CCC and later by the University of Illinois for storage. It was removed in 1966 and may have been sold to the local Fair Board along with Building #12.

Tool House (#19) - This 20' by 50' building featured loading platforms and a canopy along one side. It was used to store all the camp's tools including saws, axes, shovels, as well as supplies such as rope, wire, and nails. Each crew would check out tools in the morning and return them at the end of the day. Tools were repaired in the building as well. The University of Illinois also used the building to store surveying instruments. After the roof collapsed in 1986 the building was razed although some materials may have been retained for future use on other buildings. The Tool House was the last building to remain in the service yard.

Oil House (#22) - This 20' by 24' building was moved and attached to Building #8 in 1946 to form the Mess Hall for the University of Illinois.

Storage Garage (#23) - This 48' by 88' building was the largest in the service yard and was used to store many of the camp's trucks. Tools were also stored in the building until the Tool House (Building #19) was constructed. The building was demolished in 1950 after the University of Illinois no longer had any use for it.

¹⁴"Rabideau Camp F-50"; undated and untitled floor plan, University Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Civil Engineering Subject File Record Series 11/5/1.

¹⁵"Rabideau Camp F-50"; site plan dated August 1947, University Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Civil Engineering Subject File Record Series 11/5/1; U.S. Forest Service, undated history of the Rabideau Camp, Rabideau Camp file, Forest Supervisor's Office, Cass Lake, Minnesota.

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Storage Garage (#24) - This 20' by 54' building was apparently also used for vehicular storage and for other equipment, perhaps even lumber. It was demolished in 1946, but it is likely that salvaged materials from this building were used by the University of Illinois for construction and remodeling projects at the camp.

Repair Shop (#25) - This 32' by 42' building was used for repairing trucks, tractors, and other equipment. Because of constant use and the rough terrain, the equipment was in constant need of repairs and maintenance. CCC enrollees could receive on-the-job training at the shop. The building appears to have been demolished by 1950.

Equipment Shed (#26) - This 33' by 66' building was used for the storage of heavy equipment such as graders and plows. It appears to have been demolished by 1958.

Blacksmith Shop (#27) - This 20' by 24' building was used on a limited basis, apparently for emergency repairs. Enrollees also received training in the shop. The Blacksmith Shop was probably demolished in the 1950s. A truck tarp rack is believed to have been located along the road to the west of the Blacksmith Shop.

Coal House (#28) - This 20' by 24' building which was used for coal storage was demolished in 1946. It is possible that salvaged materials from this building were used by the University of Illinois for construction and remodeling projects at the camp.

Flagpole (#30)

A tall wooden Flagpole, which is painted white, is located at the edge of a line of cedar trees just south of the Hospital, at the camp's main entrance. It is believed the CCC constructed the Flagpole, although it can only be positively identified at this location on a site plan by the University of Illinois dated 1947. The oldest known site plan for the camp shows a flagpole just west of the Pump House. It is possible the current Flagpole was either moved to or built at its present location because this site provides much greater space for activities and gatherings than the earlier location. Because it is not known if the Flagpole existed in this location prior to 1947 and therefore historically associated with the camp, it is considered a non-contributing structure. Should subsequent research confirm this site as the historic location, the Flagpole's designation would change to contributing.¹⁶

A small boulder is located just south of the flagpole with a plaque affixed to the face with the following inscription:

Rabideau Civilian Conservation Corps Camp

Company 708 of the Civilian Conservation Corps made its home in 25 buildings here at this camp from 1936 to 1941. The Corps, or CCC as it was commonly called, was an important part of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal to bring the nation out of the Great Depression of the 1930s by putting the jobless to work in the public interest. The CCC made a significant contribution to conserving America's natural resources while providing work for some three million young men.

¹⁶"Rabideau Camp F-50"; site plan dated August 1947, University Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Civil Engineering Subject File Record Series 11/5/1.

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The 200-man Rabideau Company stationed here built roads, planted trees, developed recreation areas, fought forest fires and constructed administrative facilities in the Chippewa National Forest. The U.S. Forest Service and the Army were responsible for the organization, caring and supervision of the men.

The Rabideau CCC Camp was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1976.

*Forest Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1977*

The small boulder and plaque were installed in 1977 to commemorate the listing of the Rabideau Camp on the National Register of Historic Places on June 16, 1976.

Ball Field (#33)

The Ball Field is located west of the Service Yard at the end of the western segment of the camp's Road System. Carls Lake is located just to the north of the Ball Field. The Ball Field is defined by a large clearing characterized by low grasses and vegetation. There are no other indications of its original use. The Ball Field is considered a contributing site.

Road System (#34)

The camp's original unpaved Road System remains intact. It consists of a single, dirt-covered lane, with some grassy sections in the middle. It enters the camp from the south, forms a loop to the north and extends around and close by the camp's primary buildings. It also extends to the east to Benjamin Lake, and to the west to Carls Lake and the Ball Field. The Road system is considered a contributing structure.

Entrance Stonework (#35)

The original Entrance Stonework is located on the east edge of the entrance road, just to the south of the camp. Small stones are inset in a sloping hillside, with overall dimensions of about 30' by 15'. The stones are painted dark brown with the words, "Co. 708", painted white. The Entrance Stonework is considered a contributing structure.

Site Evolution

The camp has changed very little since 1941, although a number of buildings are no longer extant, several minor structures have been constructed, and a CCC era building was moved to the site. Three buildings were lost to fire, and several buildings were removed, generally those that were no longer in use. However, as noted in the building descriptions, some buildings were dismantled and the materials were used in later construction and remodeling by the University of Illinois, which also made other minor modifications to the camp.

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There have been minimal alterations to the landscape. The most noticeable change has been the introduction of larger areas of mowed grass throughout the site. In addition, a number of original landscape features are no longer extant such as a series of rock-lined paths, foundation plantings, and other landscaping completed by the CCC.

The following listing includes those buildings that are no longer extant¹⁷:

Mess Hall (#20) - The original CCC Mess Hall was a T-shaped building that included a 20' by 105' dining hall and a 20' by 60' extension for the kitchen. The walls were decorated with large murals featuring landscapes painted by a CCC enrollee. It is believed the building was destroyed by a fire in circa 1945, since at that time the University of Illinois noted the building had been destroyed "recently." The only known photograph of the building was taken by CCC enrollee James M. Egan¹⁸. There was a large sign next to the Mess Hall that stated, "Don't be in the Doghouse, Safety First Always, Co. 708, Rabideau Lake has had (X) Days Without a Lost Time Accident."

Wash House and Latrine (#21) - This 20' by 70' building was destroyed in the same fire in circa 1945 that destroyed the Mess Hall. However, apparently many of the interior fixtures were salvaged. The building's concrete slab may still exist below grade.

Barracks (#12) - This 20' by 75' building was used as a barracks by the CCC and later as a student dormitory by the University of Illinois. By 1966 the building was no longer being used by the university and was apparently in some disrepair. This building along with Building #18 may have been sold to the local Fair Board in about November of that year.

Pump House (#15) - This 20' by 20' building housed the camp's water pump and electrical generators. It appears to have been demolished in the 1980s.

Army Office and Supply Room (#16) - Also, known as the Headquarters Building, this 20' by 114' building provided office space for the Forest Service in the west end of the building (until they moved to Building #1), office space for the Army in the center of the building, and a supply room for clothing, bedding, and other supplies in the east end of the building. The University of Illinois used the building for recreational space until it was destroyed by fire, apparently arson, in 1949.

Forest Service Office (#1) - This building was moved from the abandoned Big Lake CCC Camp (F-28) to the Rabideau Camp to serve as the Forest Service Office in 1937-38. In 1940 the building was expanded with an extension to the east to allow for additional space. The counters, filing cabinets, desks, chairs, and even wastebaskets were all made in the camp's workshop. Ultimately, the building overall dimensions were 20' by 42'. The building was demolished in 1988.

¹⁷Rabideau Camp file, Iron Range Research Center, Chisholm, Minnesota.

¹⁸A photocopy of the photograph is located in a file on the Rabideau Camp in the Forest Supervisor's Office in Cass Lake.

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The following non-contributing buildings and structures were added to the site after the period of significance:

Fire Tool Equipment Shed (#13A)

The Fire Tool Equipment Shed is located near the northwest corner of the Army Officer's Quarters. It is a small frame structure, 3' square and approximately 6' feet tall. It is painted red and is capped with a hip roof covered with asphalt shingles. Access is gained through a small door on the west façade. Unlike the other buildings at the camp, the Fire Tool Equipment Shed is clad with flush wood siding rather than shiplap. The shed rests on four concrete blocks. It is not known whether the fire Tool Equipment Shed was at the camp while the CCC occupied the site. The shed appears on a site plan of the camp by the University of Illinois dated August 1947. It is identified simply as "Fire Tools." The shed may have been moved several feet from its location on the site plan, which may have occurred when the Army Officer's Quarters was restored in 1986. Because it is not known whether the Fire Tool Equipment Shed was historically associated with the camp, it is considered a non-contributing structure.¹⁹

Wash House (#14)

The Wash House is a one-story, rectangular frame building with overall dimensions of 10' by 15'. The building is covered with shiplap siding painted green and is capped with a low-pitch gable roof covered with blue asphalt shingles. The south facing principal facade features an off center entry flanked by single nine-light hopper window. The north wall includes three nine-light windows organized as a single group. The trim around all doors and window openings, as well as the corner boards, consists of plain wood planks painted green. A metal chimney projects from the north slope of the roof.

The construction of this building was formally discussed in the "Special Use Permit" granted to the University of Illinois for the use of the Rabideau Camp dated May 31, 1946. It was noted that, "Building number 26 (based on a prior numbering system) is to be constructed by the permittee to house a hot water tank, heater, and washroom." It was to be located between Building #10 and Building #12, although it was later noted that its position had been changed to a location south of Building #12. The building provided hot water to the adjacent buildings #9-12 and included laundry facilities. In a "Memorandum to Students" dated June 15, 1949, it was noted, "This is the laundry building and the use of its two stationary tubs is available at any time." During the National Surveying Conference held at the camp in August 1952, the boiler exploded and the building was apparently destroyed or damaged. Although rebuilt or repaired, it may have been at that time that individual water heaters were installed in the adjacent buildings. Because the Wash House was constructed after the period of significance, it is considered non-contributing. However, it is possible that the building was constructed from materials salvaged from the service yard.²⁰

Picnic Shelter (#29)

The Picnic Shelter is a partially enclosed building built with massive logs with overall dimensions of 20' by 36'.

¹⁹"Rabideau Camp F-50"; site plan dated August 1947, University Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Civil Engineering Subject File Record Series 11/5/1.

²⁰"Rabideau Camp F-50"; "Special Use Permit," 31 May 1946, attached to correspondence dated 3 January 1950, Rabideau Camp file, Iron Range Research Center, Chisholm, Minnesota; Milton Schmidt, Professor of Civil Engineering, Emeritus, to the U.S. Forest Service, 5 August 1985, Rabideau Camp file, Iron Range Research Center, Chisholm, Minnesota; *Blackduck American*, 9 July 1953.

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The shelter is covered with a low-pitched gable roof covered with wood shingles. Each sidewall features three bays formed by four vertical logs with supporting brackets. Two short vertical logs are placed next to each of the four corner posts. The shelter is entered through the center bay while log railings are placed in each flanking bay. Each end wall includes a central entry with log railings to each side. Four massive log trusses support the roof. The shelter rests on a concrete slab.

The Picnic Shelter was originally constructed by another CCC camp at a recreation area on Seelye Point on Lake Cutfoot Sioux. It was disassembled and moved to its present location in 1986. A number of logs were replaced or repaired at that time and a new concrete slab installed. It is architecturally significant as an example of the finely-crafted and labor intensive log construction executed by the CCC throughout Minnesota's state parks and national forests during the Depression Era. The Picnic Shelter is an important example of NPS Rustic style architecture and is probably individually eligible for the National Register. However, because the Picnic Shelter is not directly related to the historic themes under consideration, it is considered a non-contributing building.²¹

Storage Building (#31)

A small Storage Building is located between Barracks #3 and Barracks #5. The rectangular frame building is covered by a gable roof. The building was constructed by the University of Illinois as a restroom but now provides space for lawnmower storage. The Storage Building is considered a non-contributing building.

Vault Toilet (#32)

A Vault Toilet is located south of the camp road near the Picnic Shelter. The small rectangular building is covered by a gable roof. It was probably built in 1986 in conjunction with the installation of the Picnic Shelter. The Vault Toilet is considered a non-contributing building.

Fishing Dock (#36)

A Fishing Dock is located east of the camp's entrance road, south of the Entrance Stonework, on west side of Benjamin Lake. The dock consists of a T-shaped, wooden structure projecting into the lake that is accessed by a long ramp. The Fishing Dock was recently constructed and is considered a non-contributing structure.

In spite of the loss of a number of buildings, the Rabideau Camp retains a high level of historic integrity. The original parcel of land purchased for the construction of the camp remains completely intact and the camp retains its remote, pristine wilderness setting appropriate for a camp established to undertake a variety of forest management conservation projects. The camp's integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association is exceptional and remarkably evocative of the historic period due to the absence of any significant modern intrusions or encroachment, or major alterations to the landscape. The camp also retains a high level of integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. Alterations to the camp's buildings have also been minimal. In addition, there are only six very modest, small-scale, non-contributing structures that have been introduced at the camp. Future research may confirm that the Flagpole and the Fire Tool Equipment Shed occupy their historic locations. The one building actually built by the CCC but not directly related to the historic themes

²¹*Blackduck American*, 16 July 1986.

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under consideration does not intrude in a major way into the interpretation of the history of the camp. Moreover, the camp contains an astonishing number of buildings and structures when considering the inherent fragility of CCC camp buildings and their scarcity nationwide. Unlike nearly all other remnant CCC camps in the United States, this site provides an unusually complete representation of a CCC camp with all major functions represented, including administrative, residential, educational, and recreational. The other outstanding CCC camp, not addressed in this nomination but which should be evaluated for possible National Historic Landmark designation, is Mount Morrison in Colorado. Mount Morrison differs from Rabideau Camp notably in that it was founded to house workers engaged in recreational development projects, and has differences in historic setting and association. Together, both Rabideau and Mount Morrison provide unusually complete and outstanding representations of the range of New Deal Programs initiated between 1933 and 1944. The Rabideau CCC Camp is one of the best-preserved CCC camps in the United States.

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

Nationally: X Statewide: __ Locally: __

Applicable National

Register Criteria: A, C

Criteria Considerations

(Exceptions): N/A

NHL Criteria: 1, 4

NHL Theme(s):

- V. Developing the American Economy
 - 7. Governmental Policies and Practices
- VII. Transforming the Environment
 - 3. Protecting and Preserving the Environment

Areas of Significance:

Politics/Government
 Conservation
 Architecture
 Landscape Architecture

Period(s) of Significance: 1935-1941

Significant Dates: 1935

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: U.S. Department of the Army

Historic Contexts:

- XXXII. Conservation of Natural Resources
 - C. The Conservation Movement Matures, 1908-1941
 - D. The Great Depression and Conservation
- VII. Political and Military Affairs, 1865-1939
 - H. The Great Depression and the New Deal, 1929-1941

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State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

The Rabideau Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Camp is historically significant under National Historic Landmark Criterion 1 under the areas of significance of Conservation and Politics and Government. The camp is also associated with the National Historic Landmark themes of Developing the American Economy and Transforming the Environment, and the historic contexts of Conservation of Natural Resources, and Political and Military Affairs, 1865-1939. The camp is nationally significant for its association with the CCC, the most acclaimed and successful of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal programs. From 1933-1942, the Corps employed three million young men and virtually changed the landscape of the United States through conservation projects on millions of acres of land and the expansion and development of the nation's state and national parks and forests. Long considered one of the great conservation programs in the history of the United States, recent scholarship also suggests that the CCC revived the conservation movement that had begun during the turn-of-the-century Progressive Era and popularized the concept of conservation with the American people. Furthermore, the expansive programs of the CCC influenced and facilitated the emergence of the modern environmental movement.

The New Deal was a watershed in American history. Its innovative programs brought relief and recovery from the Great Depression and forever altered the relationship between the federal government and the American people. More than any other New Deal initiative, the CCC reflected Roosevelt's personal ideas and philosophy in which he expanded the concept of conservation to include both human and natural resources. The camps of the CCC were intended to not only restore the nation's natural resources but also the unemployed young men of America. In time, CCC projects also included disaster relief, historic restoration projects, and national defense.

The nation's 4,500 CCC camps were the key component in the success of the CCC program, creating the mechanism for executing its conservation initiatives and providing the setting for the rejuvenation and training of the young men who participated in the program. Of these thousands of camps, only a few survive, and among them, the Rabideau Camp retains exceedingly high integrity. It is a rare and nationally significant reminder of a pivotal period in the history of the United States and the innovative programs the New Deal brought to the American people. The Rabideau Camp is among the most important properties in the United States in which the history of the CCC and the New Deal can be experienced and interpreted.

The Rabideau Camp is also significant under National Historic Landmark Criterion 4 as a nationally significant example of a rare CCC camp property type. The camp is typical of the design and organization of CCC camps nationwide and it remains one of the few surviving camps in the country where the CCC camp environment can be fully experienced within an unaltered historic setting. Its architectural significance is enhanced because of the inherent fragility of CCC camp buildings, which were never considered permanent structures. Collectively, the nation's CCC camps may have contained over 70,000 buildings, yet few exist today. The Rabideau Camp contains one of the most important collections of CCC camp resources in the United States.

The CCC in the United States

On March 21, 1933, just shortly after he took the oath of office as the 32nd President of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt presented a message to Congress on the topic of unemployment relief. His proposal was prompted by the Great Depression, when unemployment rose from just over 3% of the civilian work force in 1929 to over 25% in 1933. Not only were many young people unemployed, but approximately 30% of those

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working had only part time jobs.²² Roosevelt suggested a prompt plan to enroll unemployed persons in public employment. He stated:

I have proposed to create a civilian conservation corps to be used in simple work, not interfering with the normal employment, and confining itself to forestry, the prevention of soil erosion, flood control, and similar projects. . . The type of work is of definite, practical value, not only through the prevention of great financial loss, but also as a means of creating future national wealth. . .

Control of such work can be carried on by executing machinery of the Departments of Labor, Agriculture, War and Interior. The enterprise will . . . conserve our precious natural resources and more important will be the moral and spiritual gains of such work.²³

Roosevelt's attempt to conserve both human and natural resources was an extension of his own personal philosophy. His first appointment as a New York State Senator was as chairman of the State's Committee on Forest, Fish and Game. In that position he was able to spearhead the passage of the first New York legislation on supervised forestry. While Governor, he encouraged the state legislature to pass laws to aid county and state reforestation. Public works projects were also created for the unemployed.²⁴

Congress quickly responded to Roosevelt's proposal and on March 31, 1933, Executive Order 6106, Relief of Unemployment through the Performance of Useful Public Works, was passed by Congress. One of the components of the legislation established Emergency Conservation Work, which was immediately referred to as the Civilian Conservation Corps, although not officially designated as such until 1937. The legislation was passed during what became known as the first "Hundred Days" of the Roosevelt administration in which a landmark series of fifteen major laws were enacted that launched the New Deal's remarkable relief and recovery programs.

Upon signing the bill, Roosevelt indicated he would like the program operational within just two weeks. A meeting was held with representatives from the Departments of War, Labor, Interior, and Agriculture to discuss the implementation of the legislation and the duties of each agency. As part of this cooperative effort, the Department of Labor was to initiate a nationwide recruiting program, the Army was to condition and transfer enrollees as well as operate and supervise work camps, and the Park Service and Forest Service, known as the technical services, were responsible for the actual work projects, technical planning and execution, and supervision of the work force.²⁵ Roosevelt appointed Robert Fechner, vice president of the American Federation of Labor, to head the Corps, helping to eliminate criticism from labor, which had initially opposed the plan.

Enrollees had to be unemployed single men between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five. United States citizenship was required as well as sound physical fitness, and each person selected had to demonstrate need as well. A limited number of skilled local men (LEMs) could also be hired. For these men, the age and martial stipulations were waived. The bulk of the work force, however, was to be taken from the unemployed in the large urban centers. Enrollment regulations were later relaxed in order to include American Indians and veterans of World War I. Enlistment was guaranteed for a six-month period with a two-year maximum. In return, each enrollee received food, clothing, shelter, and an allowance of \$30 per month, although it was

²²John C. Paige, *The Civilian Conservation Corps and the National Park Service: An Administrative History* (United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1985), 5.

²³Roosevelt, Franklin D., Message to Congress proposing the creation of the Civilian Conservation Corps, 21 March 1933.

²⁴Paige, 3.

²⁵Alison T. Otis, William D. Honey, Thomas C. Hogg, and Kimberly K. Lakin, *The Forest Service and the Civilian Conservation Corps: 1933-42* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Forest Service, United States Department of Agriculture, 1986), 8.

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required that \$25 be returned to their families.²⁶

On April 7, 1933, the first CCC camp (Camp Roosevelt) was opened near Luray, Virginia. By September 1933, there were 1,520 CCC camps in operation with a total enrollment of 248,740, with each camp typically containing 200 men.²⁷ A government press release from November 1933 described the extensive program of camp construction:

Forty thousand carpenters, working in 46 states and utilizing 300 million feet of lumber, are rushing to completion a record-breaking camp construction program for the Civilian Conservation Corps. On over 1,400 camp sites, a total of nearly 15,000 buildings are being constructed to take care of housing and recreation needs of the 300,000 men of the CCC for winter and spring months.²⁸

At its peak in 1935, there were more than half a million young men enrolled in the Corps in about 2,500 camps. By the time the CCC ended in July 1942, over three million young men had passed through its ranks in over 4,500 camps.²⁹

They discharged a thousand conservation tasks which had gone too long unperformed. They planted trees, made reservoirs and fish ponds, built check dams, dug diversion ditches, raised bridges and fire towers, fought blister rust and pine-twig blight and the Dutch elm disease, restored historic battlefields, cleared beaches and camping grounds, and in a multitude of ways protected and improved parks, forest, watershed, and recreational areas.

They did more, of course, than reclaim and develop natural resources. They reclaimed and developed themselves. They came from large cities and from small towns, from slum street corners and from hobo jungles, from the roads and the rails and from nowhere.....Some had never seen mountains before, had never waded in running brooks or slept in the open air. Boys from the East Side of New York found themselves in Glacier Park, boys from New Jersey at Mount Hood in Oregon, boys from Texas in Wyoming. Their muscles hardened, their bodies filled out, their self-respect returned. They learned trades; more important, they learned about America and they learned about other Americans.³⁰

James J. McEntee, the second director of the Corps, compiled a "Summary of certain phases of the CCC Program" from April 5, 1933-June 30, 1942. He noted that the CCC advanced natural resources conservation in such fields as reforestation and erosion control from twenty-five to thirty-five years, completing projects with an estimated value of more than \$1,750,000,000. He described the CCC work program as nationwide in scope with enrollees working in virtually all the national forests and parks, in state forest and park areas, on farm land, on the public domain, in wildlife refuges, along stream beds and in the arid areas of the west. Major work items and accomplishments included:

Forest trees planted	2,356,000,000
Trails and minor roads constructed	126,000

²⁶Paige, 15.

²⁷Conrad L. Wirth, *Parks, Politics, and the People* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 107.

²⁸As quoted in Otis, 174. Press release, 3 November 1933, 1-2. Located at the FDR Presidential Library, Hyde Park, NY, Official File 268, 2.

²⁹Determining the total number of enrollees has been difficult because the CCC maintained statistics for each of the Corps' six-month enrollment periods rather than on a cumulative basis. Since enrollees could serve for more than one period, the official statistics are somewhat misleading, but historians generally agree that about three million young men served in the CCC. A similar problem exists for counting the number of CCC camps. A figure of about 4,500 camps is generally accepted, however, historian Cornelius Maher places the number at closer to 5,000.

³⁰Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Age of Roosevelt: The Coming of the New Deal* (Boston: The Riverside Press Cambridge, 1959), 358-359.

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Telephone lines laid (miles)	89,000
Man-days expended fighting fires	6,459,000
Erosion control – check dams	6,660,000
Acreage covered in trees, plant disease & pest control	21,000,000

Total expenditures for food, shelter, construction of camps, transportation, and personal services was estimated at \$2,969,000,000. Allotments to dependents of enrollees was estimated at \$662,895,000.³¹

Other New Deal programs were also involved in conservation projects. The Public Works Administration (PWA), the New Deal's major construction agency, funded large-scale conservation efforts such as dams and flood control projects. The PWA also provided large appropriations to fund CCC work projects. The Works Progress Administration (WPA), established in 1935, sponsored smaller-scale work relief efforts and construction projects. The WPA often sponsored conservation projects on non-federal lands, such as state forests.

Of all the New Deal programs, it was the CCC that best reflected Roosevelt's personal philosophy and the program remained particularly important to him. He mentioned the program on several occasions during his well-known "Fireside Chats." During his talk on May 7, 1933, he stated:

First, we are giving opportunity of employment to a quarter of a million of the unemployed, especially the young men who have dependents, to let them go into forestry and flood-prevention work. This is a big task because it means feeding and clothing and caring for nearly twice as many men as we have in the regular Army itself. And in creating this civilian conservation corps we are killing two birds with one stone. We are clearly enhancing the value of our natural resources, and at the same time we are relieving an appreciable amount of actual distress. This great group of men, young men, have entered upon their work on a purely voluntary basis; no military training is involved and we are conserving not only our natural resources, but also our human resources. One of the great values to this work is the fact that it is direct and requires the intervention of very of little machinery.³²

In a subsequent "Fireside Chat" on July 24, 1933, he again mentioned the CCC noting, "The wages they earn are going in greater part to the support of nearly one million people who constitute their families."³³ On August 12, 1933, Roosevelt personally visited the nation's first CCC camp in Virginia. He was pictured in a well-known photograph surrounded by CCC enrollees. In 1934 Roosevelt told a meeting of the National Emergency Council, "The CCC camp activity has probably been the most successful of anything we have done." When speaking of Roosevelt and the CCC in 1937, the chief of the Forest Service commented, "His knowledge of its details is almost uncanny."³⁴

Historians proclaim the popularity and success of the CCC. One telling statistic notes that, "Of all the trees planted in the United States up until 1942, seventy-five percent were planted by the CCC. Its importance in the history of American conservation is without question."³⁵

³¹Perry H. Merrill, *Roosevelt's Forest Army: A History of the Civilian Conservation Corps 1933-1942* (Montpelier, VT: Perry Merrill, 1981), 96.

³²*Franklin Delano Roosevelt: Fireside Chats* (New York: Penguin Books, 1995), 11.

³³Ibid. 23.

³⁴Schlesinger, 340.

³⁵Paul L. Murphy. Cited in *Franklin Delano Roosevelt: His Life and Times, An Encyclopedic View*. Edited by Otis L. Graham, Jr. and Meghan Robinson Wander. (Boston: G.K. Hall & Co), 3.

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Perhaps historian Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. summarized the accomplishments of the CCC best when he noted that, “. . . the CCC was unquestionably one of the most fortunate of New Deal inventions. . . . The CCC left its monuments in the preservation and purification of the land, the water, the forests, and the young men of America.”³⁶

The CCC in Minnesota

A summary of the accomplishments of the CCC in Minnesota provides insight into the programs of the CCC and is also indicative of the tremendous impact of the CCC on the landscape of the United States.

The Rabideau Camp was one of twenty-three CCC camps to operate on the Chippewa National Forest during the Depression Era. Two of the camps, Thirteen Mile and Boy River, were originally state camps, operated in cooperation with the Minnesota Department of Conservation. However, both were converted to federal camps when land acquisitions by the Forest Service absorbed their work areas into the Chippewa National Forest. All camps did not operate simultaneously and in some cases companies, like Company 708 of the Rabideau Camp, occupied more than one camp.³⁷ One additional camp operated in the Chippewa National Forest, SP-16, the Leech Lake Wayside Park, which was under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service rather than the U.S. Forest Service.

The alphabetical prefix preceding the camp number denotes the camp designation and identifies the work area associated with the camp as well as the supervising agency. For example, "F" indicates a National Forest with the U.S. Forest Service providing the supervisory personnel; "SP" indicates a state park (or in some cases a wayside) where activities were supervised by the National Park Service in cooperation with the appropriate state agency; "NP" indicates a National Park where activities were supervised by the National Park Service, etc.

The Chippewa National Forest was originally a National Forest Reserve created by the Morris Bill of June 27, 1902. It consisted of 200,000 acres of pine land and 25,000 acres of agricultural land. This was the first Forest Reserve created by direct Congressional action rather than Presidential Proclamation. The timber on the 200,000 acres was to be cut and sold for the benefit of the Ojibwe. However, 5% of the timber had to remain standing for purposes of reforestation. In addition, an area equal to ten sections (6,400 acres) had to be preserved. On May 23, 1908 the name of the reserve was officially changed to the Minnesota National Forest and the amount of pine to be left standing was increased from 5% to 10%. In 1928 the name was changed to the Chippewa National Forest to more accurately reflect its history.³⁸ Ranger stations were built at Cass Lake, Bena, and Cut Foot Sioux, but staffing and funding were minimal and management policies were largely custodial in nature rather than proactive.

The tremendous manpower offered by the CCC and dramatic increases in federal funding offered an unprecedented opportunity to expand the boundaries of the Chippewa National Forest and implement active management policies. During the Depression Era, the Chippewa National Forest dramatically increased in size to both the north and south of the original lands. An Executive Order, dated August 31, 1933, approved what became known as the North Purchase Unit, a 675,000 acre expansion to the north of the existing National Forest. From these lands were created the Marcell, Blackduck, and Dora Lake Ranger Districts. On January 21, 1935, a 356,236 acre expansion, known as the South Purchase Unit, was approved and the Walker and Remer Ranger Districts were subsequently established. Each ranger district averaged 180,000 acres. This

³⁶Schlesinger, 340.

³⁷Keith W. Matson, "The Civilian Conservation Corps on the Chippewa National Forest," 1985.

³⁸Gifford Pinchot, *Breaking New Ground*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1947), 203-212.

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brought the total area of the Chippewa National Forest to over 1.2 million acres, although only roughly half was federal land with the remaining acreage consisting of lands that were state or privately owned. However, unlike the original lands of the Chippewa National Forest, the newly acquired lands were generally cut-over or burnt-over, some of which had been left tax delinquent by the logging companies, and in need of all aspects of forest improvement.

A "Ranger District Job Load", dated May 20, 1935, described the wide variety of conservation projects that were occurring in the eight ranger districts throughout the Chippewa National Forest. These included land and timber surveys, stand and roadside improvement, planned land acquisitions, an annual planting program of thirty-six million trees, an analysis of the fire protection problem, pest control, erosion work, fish restocking, wild life activities, and the construction of 761 miles of Forest Service truck trails and roads, with 918 additional miles planned. Statistics were compiled concerning the local forest industries, unemployment on the district was studied, and even the number of livestock was estimated. There were also eighteen rural rehabilitation projects involving 3,960 families. These projects were presumably operated in conjunction with the Resettlement Administration (RA), the New Deal agency that administered such activities. RA projects included the relocation of settlers from submarginal agricultural lands through land exchanges or direct purchase, the increase in the size of individual farmsteads so that they could become economically feasible, or loans and advice on farm management. At the time the report was prepared, there were thirteen CCC camps in operation on the Chippewa National Forest, although a total of twenty-three were planned.

A report by the Forest Service from 1938 noted that to date trees had been planted on 30,000 acres on the Chippewa National Forest and of these 23,000 acres had been planted by the CCC since the advent of the program in 1933. Timber stand improvement had taken place on approximately 36,000 acres. Three hundred miles of telephone lines had been installed to link the system of lookout towers in order to provide rapid communication. The seventy-acre Lydick Tree Nursery, established in 1933, was producing 40,000,000 trees annually. Together with the Cass Lake Extractory, the Chippewa National Forest could extract and store seed, raise seedlings, and transplant and pack trees for shipment to planting areas. It was noted that, "The Forest Management Plan embraces timber management, fire control, artificial reforestation, experimental silviculture, water conservation, forest recreation, wild life management, and land acquisition all predicated on proper land use planning."³⁹

A variety of CCC-built structural improvements were also occurring throughout the Chippewa National Forest. New ranger stations were built at Blackduck, Dora Lake, Marcell (NRHP 1994)⁴⁰, Walker, and Remer, while new buildings were constructed at the existing Cass Lake, Bena, and Cut Foot Sioux stations. Both the Marcell and Dora Lake Ranger Stations featured collections of finely-crafted Rustic style log buildings. Twenty-three lookout towers were built for fire protection, as well as twenty-three camp and picnic grounds, including the Norway Beach camp ground on Cass Lake that included a log bathhouse and community building with a two-story split-stone fireplace. A picnic ground on Lake Cut Foot Sioux featured a partially enclosed shelter built with huge logs that has now been moved to the Rabideau CCC Camp. A wayside was built on Willow Lake that included a log bathhouse and extensive retaining walls and stairways built with stone, and the Shing-O-Bee Winter Sports Area was constructed. An organization, or group camp, was built on Ruby Lake for use by Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, 4-H and other organized groups. Still in use to this day, the camp consists of twenty-three buildings, organized in three collections of dormitory cabins around a central administrative core, that were built featuring vertical board and batten construction. One of the Chippewa National Forest's most intriguing construction projects, and one which clearly demonstrates the possibilities offered by the manpower

³⁹Forest Service, *Chippewa National Forest*, 1938, 4-18.

⁴⁰Rolf T. Anderson, "Marcell Ranger Station." National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. 29 December 1994.

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of the CCC, was an immense overlook built with fieldstone above a picturesque stream, but located on a remote, unpaved forest road northeast of the Marcell Ranger Station. The most impressive building was the 8,500 square foot Forest Supervisor's Office (NRHP 1976) at Cass Lake, a three-story structure built with 20,000 lineal feet of logs, that included twenty-two rooms and a 180-ton stone fireplace.⁴¹

These conservation efforts and structural improvements were indicative of broader changes in management philosophy in the Chippewa National Forest from one that was essentially custodial in nature to one of intensive management. This change was described in the *Grand Rapids Herald-Review* in an article dated October 31, 1934, that included the following comments from forest supervisor James M. Walley:

The Chippewa National Forest spreads over a large area, reaching from Cass Lake on the west and nearly to Bigfork on the northeast. From the forest communities in and about the Chippewa, the regular CCC organization of about 3,000 men is augmented by some 230 local men who are enrolled as local woodsmen. In addition to these local woodsmen, nearly 50 local men out of 150 foremen and camp superintendents are employed on the Chippewa. This is a far cry from the dozen or fifteen men who found employment in the old days on the forest. In the old days before the CCC force was created by President Roosevelt, three rangers and a few lookout men formed the administrative organization. A few other men were given seasonal work at the nursery or in the maintenance of roads. Although logging and some planting took place, the far-reaching projects of today were merely ideals and mostly subjects for textbook writers. The CCC's [sic] have given us the opportunity to put into practical application the principals [sic] of forestry on a large scale and realize the ambitions of every forester.

This was further reiterated by H. Basil Wales, the chief of the Division of Timber Management in the North Central Region, who described the evolution of management on the Chippewa National Forest:

The (CCC) program enabled the foresters in charge to give cultural treatment to young stands and to develop physical improvements on the forest far beyond their hopes and anticipations. . .

From the standpoint of forest management, one had to start from scratch to restore and build up forest productivity. The CCC program helped greatly. At first the job was one of establishing protection facilities--lookout towers, communication lines, and roads--for more rapid transportation for fire-fighting crews. . .

As land was purchased, the process of restoring the forest became a more important part of the program. At the same time, other resource values were enhanced. The camp work plans included projects for the protection and the administration of the forest, recreational development, and better food and habitat for wildlife. Land use plans were prepared to strengthen the agricultural communities through the transfer of settlers from poor and isolated tracts. . .

The process of rebuilding a fully productive forest is not completed but is well under way. The value of good management has been demonstrated and will become even more apparent as the trees grow toward maturity.⁴²

Similar developments were occurring on Minnesota's Superior National Forest where approximately the same number of CCC camps operated during the Depression Era. From a regional perspective, significant accomplishments were occurring throughout the North Central Region of the U. S. Forest Service that included Minnesota, Michigan, Wisconsin, Iowa, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and North Dakota. In a booklet entitled "Two Years Afield with the C.C.C." by the region's Milwaukee office, it was noted that within just two years the cause of forestry had been advanced at least two decades. With between 50,000 and 60,000 CCC enrollees at work, 302,000 man days had been spent in suppressing fires, 83,000 miles of roads and trails had

⁴¹Stanley A. Johnson, "Supervisor's Office." National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. 30 July 1975.

⁴²H. Basil Wales, "Evolution of Management on Chippewa," *Trees: The Yearbook of Agriculture*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1949), 314-319.

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been built to facilitate fire control, 112 lookout towers were constructed, 3,825 miles of telephone lines were installed to improve communication, 290,000 acres of high hazard areas were cleared of dead and down timber, windfall and snags, 4,500 miles of roadside cleanup was completed, and 1,535 miles of firebreaks constructed. Timber stands were improved on 80,000 acres and 118,838 acres were planted with trees. Forest inventories were completed, recreational areas were developed, wild life resources were improved which included stocking 750,000 fish, and soil and water conservation measures were implemented with particular emphasis on controlling erosion.⁴³

Perhaps most telling was the dramatic expansion of the National Forests in the North Central Region. Prior to June 1933 gross acreage totaled 4,734,531. By April 1, 1935, the National Forest lands had been expanded to include 19,150,265 acres. Nationally, the U.S. Forest Service supervised more than 50% of the country's CCC camps, while the remaining camps were under the jurisdiction the National Park Service, the Soil Conservation Service and other technical agencies. In addition to the CCC camps which operated on Minnesota's National Forests, there were thirty-one camps in state forests often under the technical guidance of the Forest Service but working in cooperation with the Division of Forestry of the Minnesota Department of Conservation. There were also twenty-one camps in state and municipal parks, working on highway wayside projects, under the supervision of the National Park Service and in cooperation with the Division of State Parks of the Minnesota Department of Conservation. (Over 500 Rustic style buildings and structures were also constructed in Minnesota's state parks during the New Deal.) Finally fourteen camps were involved in erosion and drought control under the supervision of the Soil Conservation Service and in cooperation with the Division of Drainage and Waters of the Minnesota Department of Conservation.

History of the Rabideau Camp

The establishment of the Rabideau CCC Camp F-50 was announced in an article in *The Blackduck American*, dated May 1, 1935, that stated:

Two additional CCC camps will be established about June 15th in Beltrami County according to an announcement received from Congressman R.T. Buckler's office in Washington, D. C., according to information given out by Robert C. Fechner, Director of the Emergency Conservation Works.⁴⁴

One of these camps will have its post office at Blackduck and the other Bagley. The first will be a federal forest camp to be known as F-50, while the latter will be a state forest camp designated as S-98.

A picturesque site was selected six miles south of Blackduck, Minnesota between Carls Lake and Benjamin Lake amid a stand of birch trees. The site was selected, "because of its centralized location to contemplated work within the area, protection against forest fires that might occur, and proximity to a rail(road)."⁴⁵ Lake Rabideau, named for Oliver Rabideau, an early settler, was located a short distance to the east. Construction of the Rabideau Camp was begun with civilian labor and the camp was nearly complete when its first occupants arrived, Company 3749. The Company had been formed at Bennett Springs State Park near Lebanon, Missouri in July 1935 under the direction of Lieutenant Jefferson T. Meyers of the United States Army. The new CCC Company had needed over a month to organize, with the majority of its enrollees coming from southern Missouri, and in about mid-August they departed Lebanon for a one-and-one-half day train ride to Blackduck. By late September construction of the camp was finished and the CCC Company organized a dance to celebrate

⁴³U.S. Forest Service. "Two Years Afield with the C.C.C." U.S. Department of Agriculture. North Central Region. 1935.

⁴⁴Emergency Conservation Work was the technical name for the Civilian Conservation Corps, although the program was eventually formally renamed the CCC in 1937. However, it was commonly known as the CCC throughout the entire period.

⁴⁵"CCC Celebrated Their 3rd Anniversary March 31," *The Blackduck American*, 8 April 1936, 2.

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its completion.

Forestry projects, which were supervised by the United States Forest Service, Chippewa National Forest, included planting trees in September and October until the ground was frozen, and later clearing brush and undergrowth along right of ways. Fallen trees were loaded on trucks and hauled back to the camp for firewood. But apparently because the Company found the Minnesota winter difficult, they were transferred to Williams, California, after a little more than four months at the Rabideau Camp.⁴⁶

The camp's next occupant was Company 708, which was to remain at the camp until it closed in 1941. The company had transferred from the Winnibigoshish Camp F-15 located forty-six miles southeast of the Rabideau Camp. This company had organized on May 5, 1933, at Fort Snelling, Minnesota under Captain Ernest F. Boruski of the Third Infantry, who was also referred to as the Camp Commander. On May 27, 1933, Army personnel and 188 CCC enrollees left for Bena, Minnesota and from there were transported by truck to a location twelve miles to the northwest, just east of Lake Winnibigoshish. An original roster for the company indicates that all enrollees were from Minnesota, predominantly from the northern part of the state. The company erected a sizeable tent camp that was to be their home for several months while a permanent camp was built. Additional personnel consisted of staff from the U.S. Forest Service headed by C.W. Carlson, who was referred to as the Camp Superintendent, and twenty local woodsmen, known as Local Experienced Men or LEMs, who were hired to provide skilled labor and supervision. The Company began to construct the camp in July and by early October sixteen buildings had been completed, all featuring palisade log construction.⁴⁷

Conservation work included fire hazard removal, roadside cleanup, planting and thinning trees, and other forest culture work. In the fall it was noted that, "Practically every day consisted of the rush of fire fighting details..."⁴⁸

After about two and one-half years at the site, it was announced that the company would be moving from the Winnibigoshish Camp to the recently vacated Rabideau Camp. The forty-six mile move took place on January 5, 1936, with temperatures that were said to have been between thirty and forty-five degrees below zero. But in spite of the temperatures, the camp's Educational Advisor, Clair T. Rollings, noted, "...our first impression of Camp Rabideau was favorable. The forest green, white trimmed camp buildings, standing in deep snow among sparkling white birch trees made a pretty picture."⁴⁹ By the time the company had transferred to the Rabideau Camp, J.A. Free had been appointed Camp Commander and D.W. Campbell had become the Camp Superintendent for the U.S. Forest Service.

The oldest known site plan for the camp, which was probably prepared by mid-1936, depicts the camp in its original form with the principal common-use buildings, including a mess hall, wash house, and hospital, all located at the center of the camp on a north-south axis. Four barracks were located to both the east and west of

⁴⁶R.L. Williams, "Memories of CCC #3749 - 1935," January 1986. An unpublished history located at the Forest Supervisor's Office, Cass Lake, Minnesota.

⁴⁷Log construction would be considered quite unusual for a CCC camp, whose buildings were generally straightforward frame structures. Other examples of this construction method in Minnesota include CCC Camp SP-3 (now razed) that was located on the east shore of Lake of the Isles at Scenic State Park, and the Third River CCC Camp S-59 (now razed) near Alwood which was in close proximity to the Rabideau Camp.

⁴⁸C.N. Alleger, *Civilian Conservation Corps, Minnesota District* (Rapid City, South Dakota: Johnston and Bordewyk Inc. Printers, circa 1935), 107-110. This history is undated, although the section on Company 708 ends with the statement that, "In conclusion, and to make this history full and accurate, we must remember that on June 2nd, 1934, the company entered quarantine for scarlet fever and at the present date is hopefully looking forward to their deliverance from the cramped situation into which it has been thrown."

⁴⁹Rollings, Clair T. "History of Company 708 Civilian Conservation Corps." An unpublished history dated 15 March 1977, 9-10, located at the Forest Supervisor's Office, Cass Lake, Minnesota.

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the core buildings. A recreation hall was positioned at the northern edge of the camp overlooking Carls Lake while the service yard was located to the southwest and included two garages for the Army and Forest Service, an oil house, and gas pump. The office was near Benjamin Lake to the southeast and included space for the Army and Forest Service as well as a central supply room. Additional buildings and structures included separate living quarters for the Army and Forest Service personnel, a pump house, a water tower supporting a redwood tank, and a flagpole. The camp's road system formed a loop with convenient access to the majority of the buildings. A network of "rock bordered paths" is also noted on the site plan. Landscaped areas were designated as well and included the central core areas and portions of the grounds to the east, although it is not clear if "landscaped" referred to something other than perhaps mowed grass. A numbering system was also employed but it only included the eight barracks which were identified as B.1.-B.8.⁵⁰

Enrollees arriving at the Rabideau Camp were given a physical examination and small pox vaccination at the camp's hospital. An army Class A uniform was issued for dress and army fatigues for work. After having been assigned to one of the camp's barracks, enrollees were issued a mattress, four blankets, a comforter, and a set of linens that were changed once a week. The camp day began at 6:00 a.m. and after breakfast was served in the mess hall the men would line up at the camp's entrance at about 8:00 a.m. to wait for the day's work assignments from the Forest Service. Trucks would transport the crews to the project sites but would return to the camp for lunch unless the distance became impractical in which case lunch was either packed or delivered to the men, who were issued mess kits. A certain number of men would remain behind to assist with work activities at the camp, which included wood details, an important function in the months of August, September, and October in order to prepare for winter. The work crews would return to the camp at about 4:00 p.m. and had time to shower before supper was served at 5:00. Evening classes began at 6:00 p.m. and were over by 9:00 p.m. Lights out was at 10:00 p.m., which left one hour for reading in the camp library or time to work on a project in the camp workshop. Saturday was spent washing clothes, cleaning the barracks, and enjoying a variety of athletic and recreational activities including softball, basketball, volleyball, swimming, fishing, hiking, skiing, skating, pool, ping-pong, card tournaments, and camping trips. On Sunday a civilian clergyman held services in the camp, although trucks were provided for enrollees who wished to attend services in Blackduck. A chaplain also visited the camp three times a month.

Detailed information on the Rabideau Camp was compiled as part of annual inspections conducted by the Washington, D.C. headquarters of the CCC. Reports survive for inspections conducted on July 8, 1936, November 23, 1938, July 25, 1939, and August 14, 1940.⁵¹ These reports not only yield information about the operation and activities of the camp, but they also provide insight into the well-organized administration of the CCC. A series of fill-in-the blank type forms were developed for use by the inspector that were completed during the on-site review and returned to the Washington office. The forms were numbered, and in time certain revisions were made. However, each inspection generally included a several page "Camp Inspection Report" form, a form that listed certain personnel at the camp, a detailed report on the educational activities at the camp, and a report concerning the operation of the mess hall that included camp menus. In later years a separate safety questionnaire was added and certain supplemental reports were also included. Initially the stationery used for the reports was headed "Emergency Conservation Work Camps", or "Emergency Conservation Work", while later forms were headed "Civilian Conservation Corps", after the name of the program had been officially changed.

⁵⁰This undated site plan, entitled "Rabideau CCC Camp, CCC Co. 708", is located at the University Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, in the Civil Engineering Subject File Record Series 11/5/1.

⁵¹Each report is identified as "Camp Inspection Report" for Camp F-50, and is located in Box 110 within the Records of the Civilian Conservation Corp, Record Group 35, at the National Archives, Washington, D.C.

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The oldest surviving report dated July 8, 1936, prepared just six months after Company 708 occupied the camp, was completed by Harry Collier and was received in the Office of the Director of Emergency Conservation Work on July 13, 1936. It was noted that there were 148 men in the Company. Of these, 102 men were assigned to Forest Service projects, twelve were local men who were providing skilled labor or some type of supervision, twenty-one were assigned to work at the camp itself, two were sick, six were absent without leave, and five were absent with leave. The Army personnel were listed as follows:

J.A. Free	1st Lieutenant (Company Commander)
L.F. Robbins	1st Lieutenant
H.S. Ehrenreich	Contract Surgeon

The staff for the Forest Service was listed as follows, including their annual salaries:

D.W. Campbell	Camp Superintendent ⁵²	\$2,600.00
O.S. Matthews	Technical Foreman	\$2,000.00
Willard D. Wright	Technical Foreman	\$2,000.00
Raymond Matson	Technical Foreman	\$2,000.00
Bert Moen	Construction Foreman	\$2,000.00
Henry Hanson	Construction Foreman	\$2,000.00
John D. Meyers	Mechanic	\$1,440.00
Walter Johnson	Blade Operator	\$1,500.00

The camp's work projects were described as road construction, administrative improvement, timber stand improvement, reforestation, and fire tower construction.

A number of items were to be rated as either excellent, good, fair, or poor. These included the condition of shoes and clothing, food supplies, the various buildings at the camp, and the overall condition of the camp. All were rated either excellent or good. The sanitation of the camp was described as follows, "Water supply from a well approved by Fort Leavenworth - garbage removed daily - Latrine flush type to a septic tank. Waste water through closed sewer to a disposal field. All door(s) and windows screened." Various questions had to be answered about the camp's safety program. Trucks and other equipment and their condition were described, and whether trucks were provided for recreation. Any discharges were also noted. The "spirit and morale of enrollees" was described as good, the highest rating for this category.

It was also noted that a copy of the week's menu was to be filed with the inspection report. Menus were included for June 22, 1936-June 28, 1936, and each was signed by J.A. Free, the Camp Commander, and William McCart, the Mess Steward. The following meals were served at the Rabideau Camp on Tuesday, June 23, 1936:

Breakfast

Fresh milk - 45 quarts	\$6.30
Corn flakes - 17 boxes	\$1.70
Oranges - 1 case	\$4.00
Fried Potatoes (left over)	
Pork Sausage - 40 lbs	\$6.33

⁵²In about 1937 Charles Knoblauch was appointed Camp Superintendent for the Forest Service.

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Bread - 30 lbs	\$1.80
Butter - 6 lbs	\$1.68
Coffee	<u>\$1.00</u>
	\$22.81

Dinner

Chili con carne	\$7.00
Boiled potatoes - 15 gallons	\$1.50
Radishes	\$.75
Sliced onions	
Bread - 50 lbs	\$3.00
Butter - 6 lbs	\$1.68
Coffee	\$1.00
Cake - 6 pans	<u>\$3.50</u>
	\$17.93

Supper

Roast pork - 100 lbs	\$19.00
Dressing loaves (left over)	\$.50
Gravy (no cost)	
Mashed potatoes - 20 gallons	\$2.00
Lettuce salad and pineapple	\$1.25
Celery	\$.75
Bread - 50 lbs	\$3.00
Butter - 6 lbs	\$1.68
Jello with whipped cream	\$3.50
Tea	<u>\$.75</u>
	\$32.43

Total Cost \$73.17

One of the report's most extensive inclusions was the "Monthly Camp Educational Report" for the month of June 1936 that was prepared by Educational Advisor Rollings. The report confirms the importance that the CCC placed on enrollee education. Enrollees attended a variety of classes such as English, public speaking, mathematics, and typing and those who had not completed high school received instruction that enabled them to qualify for a general education diploma (GED). Evening classes were taught by camp supervisory personnel and visiting instructors on a voluntary basis. Courses pertained to the camp's current projects, timber stand improvement, carpentry, woodworking, welding, and auto mechanics. Wildlife conservation was also taught and there were generally between 30 and 50 enrollees who were members of the National Audubon Society. The camp newsletter, "Pine Knots", was printed in the Education Building.⁵³

An astonishing number of classes were taught at the camp by Rollings, other camp personnel, as well as

⁵³Claire T. Rollings, "History of Company 708 Civilian Conservation Corps," 15 March 1977, Rabideau Camp file, Forest Supervisor's Office, Cass Lake, Minnesota; "Camp Inspection Report," 8 July 1936, File: "Minnesota Camp F-50," Records of the Civilian Conservation Corps, Box 110, Record Group 35, National Archives, Washington, DC.

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enrollees. These included Business Arithmetic, Business English, Composition, Penmanship, and Spelling, all considered elementary courses; Journalism, Sociology, Typing I, and Typing II, all considered high school courses; and Agriculture, Automobile Mechanics, Baking, Carpentry, Commercial Art, Cooking, Freehand Drawing, Forest Protection, Motion Picture Projection, Photography, Taxidermy, Truck Driving, and Wild Life Conservation, all considered vocational courses. A total of 159 were enrolled in these classes, which had met a total of 108 times for a total attendance of 769.

Thirteen correspondence courses were also available from the University of North Dakota, although twelve of these were apparently considered high school level. Classes were also given in teacher and leader training. On the job training included Tower Cabin Building, Tower Construction, Lookout Tower Operation, Road Construction, and Lineal Survey. Informal classes included Block Printing, Leather Work, Metal Work, Painting, Wood Carving, Drama (acting and designing), and First Aid. Lecture topics included, Believing in God, Camp Cleanliness, Later Life of Christ, Music, Safety, and Venereal Diseases. Motion pictures were shown frequently with films provided by the Department of the Interior, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Navy, what was described as the American Museum, and other sources. On the job training was being provided to 19.2% of the enrollees while 80.8% participated in the educational program during leisure hours.⁵⁴ Five hundred twenty-four books were available in the camp library. The camp newspaper, "Pine Knots", was being published once a month.⁵⁵ It was noted that of the 151 enrollees at the camp, as of June 1936, 93% had finished the eighth grade and 18% had finished high school.⁵⁶

Work projects by the Rabideau Camp involved nearly all aspects of forest management including tree planting, timber stand improvement (TSI), fire fighting, surveying, logging, trail building, bridge construction, and stream erosion control, as well as developing swimming beaches, recreational areas and other construction projects. The 1937 publication of *Minnesota CCC History* noted:

Road construction has held priority over all projects undertaken by the technical (Forest) service. Much heavy equipment, including 4 caterpillar tractors, 1 tumble bug, 2 power graders, 2 hand graders, 1 gas shovel, and a fleet of 27 trucks is assembled at our camp. Roadside cleanup, lake sounding, tree planting, cultural work, lineal survey, rodent control, and wildlife protection have all come in for their share of attention. More than half a million trees were planted by the men of our company during the spring of 1937.⁵⁷

Other projects included stocking Twin, Lost, and Moose Lakes, all south of Blackduck, with a shipment of twenty-two cans of sunfish and crappie fingerlings, filling a sink hole on the Blackduck-Cass Lake road, and collecting fifty bushels of white pine cones from which the seeds were to be extracted. A log bridge was

⁵⁴One of the camp's educational programs was the Company 708 Chapter of the National Audubon Society that developed from a nature study group. A historic photograph taken at the camp depicts twenty-five men with a sign stating, "Jr. Audubon Wildlife Class, Co. 708 CCC, Blackduck, Minn." Members attended regular meetings, participated in field trips and overnight excursions, built several kayaks, and constructed and erected birdhouses and feeders that were located throughout the camp.

⁵⁵One copy of "Pine Knots" is located in a file on the Rabideau Camp at the Forest Supervisor's Office in Cass Lake. It is dated March 22, 1940, and identified as Volume 6, Number 12. It included an Editorial Page; a page called Barracks Boners with humorous anecdotes; the Chaplain's Page; a page called Chatterbox that included various types of information such as who had recently arrived or departed the camp and a listing of the educational classes for which enrollees could receive certificates; a page called Forestry News that described camp projects; a page of jokes called Pause for Hilarious Laughter; an Education page describing various classes and opportunities; a page called Trade Ins which included short articles submitted by other CCC camps on the Forest; and several pages of advertisements from businesses in the towns of Blackduck, Bemidji, and Deer River.

⁵⁶Subsequent inspection reports from 1938, 1939, and 1940 provided similar information about the camp and its activities and operation.

⁵⁷The exact citation for this publication is not known, as only an excerpt exists in the files of the U.S. Forest Service at the Forest Supervisor's Office in Cass Lake. It appears to be an update to the previously mentioned *Civilian Conservation Corps, Minnesota District* published in circa 1935.

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constructed across Turtle River by the Sugar Bush schoolhouse, connecting Beltrami County Road No. 7 with two National Forest roads. The project involved building a coffer dam and pumping the interior dry before construction could begin. The "Hines Spur" was regraded, widened, and several small bridges were replaced, and the road adjacent to Lake Rabideau was also regraded and widened. In mid-1938 it was noted that furrowing plows were working a double shift in anticipation of preparing sufficient land to accommodate 850,000 trees in 1939. Moss, or lichen, was collected from areas east of Pimushe Lake, south of the Rabideau Camp, to feed caribou that had been introduced on the State Game Refuge near Waskish as one of the wildlife projects of the Beltrami Island Project.⁵⁸ Fireways were improved on the Blackduck District by clearing them of brush and other obstacles, filling ruts, cutting down center ridges, and installing simple culverts. These narrow lanes led from the forest truck trails and were considered an important part of the fire control system. The fireways provided access to certain inaccessible spots that had proven a serious fire hazard in the past. During their first two years at the camp, Company 708 had been involved in fighting thirteen major fires. Two hundred-fifty acres of timber were improved in Sugar Bush Township, and in areas around Island Lake, by pruning low inferior branches and cutting away trees of inferior species, resulting in faster growth, more vigorous trees, and higher quality timber.⁵⁹ In March 1938 it was reported that to date the camp had constructed 21.5 miles of road, reconstructed 19.5 miles, and had surfaced 23.5 miles. The camp was involved in the construction of the Blackduck Ranger Station, fire towers at Blackduck and Pimushe, a dam on the outlet from Rabideau Lake, as well as recreational areas in the Chippewa National Forest. It is also believed they assisted in the construction of the massive three-story log Forest Supervisor's Office in Cass Lake.

While many of the conservation efforts of the CCC are now invisible to the modern eye, today's visitors to the Rabideau Camp may experience one of the camp's projects by visiting a white spruce plantation planted by 89 enrollees in May 1940. The 33.2 acre site is located about one mile from the camp along the north shore of Carls Lake. Four-year-old white spruce seedlings from the Chippewa National Forest's Cass Lake Nursery were planted, with each man planting about 200 per day. Some time later, eighty-three days were spent removing aspen and brush from the stand. The plantation was thinned in 1984-86 and was thinned again in 2004, with a final harvest planned for 2024. At that time the largest trees will be about 80' tall and 18" in diameter. Remarkably, the original furrows between the rows of trees may still be seen.

The camp itself had been expanding since the arrival of Company 708. One of the early changes appears to have been the addition of two wings to the Education Building. Later, a barracks was built to the north of the Mess Hall. It was probably constructed so that the camp could accommodate a full complement of 200 men. While the earliest "Camp Inspection Report" indicated the company strength at 148 men, reports from 1938, 1939, and 1940 indicate there were consistently just under 200 men at the camp. The most significant changes may have occurred at the camp in 1937-38. At that time, a building was moved from the abandoned Big Lake CCC Camp (F-28) to the Rabideau Camp to serve as the Forest Service Office. Previously office space had been shared with the Army. The building was positioned at the entrance to the camp, just south of the Forest Service Officer's Quarters. The service yard was also expanded with the addition of a 50' by 20' Tool House and a 60' by 20' Equipment Shed. The Blacksmith Shop was also enlarged. A beautification project was also undertaken, apparently by the enrollees during off hours.

⁵⁸The Beltrami Island Project, one of the state's most extensive federal relief efforts, was undertaken by the Resettlement Administration near the Canadian border. One of the wildlife projects was the introduction of ten woodland caribou, no longer native to Minnesota, from Saskatchewan, Canada. The calves were cared for at Ludlow Island, one of the project's side camps, and were fed moss or lichen five times a days, said to be essential to their well-being.

⁵⁹These projects were described in articles in the *The Blackduck American* dated 12 August 1936, 14 October 1936, 7 July 1937, 16 February 1938, 14 March 1938, 30 March 1938, 29 June 1938, 25 October 1939, 6 December 1939, and 14 December 1939.

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This work is being comprised of chiefly flanking all buildings with wild ferns and woodland shrubs. Flower beds and sodding has been placed in appropriate locations. A thousand feet of lumber has been used in the construction of new flower boxes which have been planted with flowering plants.

At a recent inspection the camp was pronounced the most beautiful in the whole state of Minnesota both as to location site and landscaping.⁶⁰

Additional work occurred in 1939 when the interiors of the Hospital, Forest Service Officer's Quarters, Mess Hall, Wash House, Army Office and Supply Building, and the library in the Education Building were remodeled. In 1940 the Forest Service Office building was expanded with an extension to the east to allow for additional space. The counters, filing cabinets, desks, chairs, and even wastebaskets were all made in the camp's workshop. This project was described in an article that noted:

Rabideau Lake Camp enrollees interested in carpentry have recently completed repairing and refinishing wornout camp buildings. All buildings were originally of temporary construction to meet emergency needs and have since been repaired and improved as their use demands . . .

As a matter of policy, native material is used wherever possible on all types of work, and salvage material is also used whenever consistent with sound construction. An outstanding example of the use of salvage material, made attractive through careful handling, is the cedar interior finish used in buildings recently repaired. Although this is ordinarily an expensive type of finish, it was obtained for the camp at practically no cost through the use of discarded telephone poles.⁶¹

In addition to the accomplishments of the Rabideau Camp in the area of conservation, the camp also impacted the local community, both economically and in terms of interaction with the surrounding area. This was first noted in an article in *The Blackduck American*, dated May 1, 1935, that commented on the establishment of both the Rabideau Camp and a second camp in Beltrami County:

Approximately \$20,000 will be spent in the construction of each of the new camps. With about 200 young men enrolled in each camp, it will also mean an expenditure, on the basis of about \$5 per month per man, or about \$1,000 in the community where the camp is located. Purchases for food rations made in the vicinity of the camp will amount to about \$1,800 per month. Other expenditures will bring the sum up to from \$3,000 to \$5,000 per month in each of the communities where the camps are located, Mr. Fechner's office reports.

The CCC camps were intended to have a positive effect on the areas in which they were located, but beyond the economic impact, the Rabideau Camp developed a close relationship with the town of Blackduck and the surrounding community both from a social and civic standpoint. The extent of this relationship is revealed by three front-page articles in *The Blackduck American*, dated March 24, 1937, concerning the CCC. Although the paper served a rather small community, and usually featured numerous smaller articles, the presence of three articles indicates the strong interest in the CCC. One article announced an open house that would occur at all CCC camps in the Chippewa sub-district (one of the state's organizational divisions of the CCC) on Sunday, April 4, 1937, to celebrate the fourth anniversary of the CCC. The public was invited to inspect the camps and a special invitation was extended to Blackduck citizens to visit the Rabideau Camp. A second article announced that the Blackduck Community Club had been invited to the Rabideau Camp for a steak dinner and to conduct their regular meeting. The third article discussed the role of education at a CCC camp and included an interview with the camp's Educational Advisor, Clair T. Rollings. In fact, there was actually a fourth article that announced that the CCC camp at Alvwood, located to the east of Blackduck, was in the process of being

⁶⁰"Company 708 CCC Camp Here Is Enlarged," *The Blackduck American*, 29 June 1938, 1.

⁶¹"Enrollees Reconstruct Buildings at Camp," *The Blackduck American*, 25 January 1940, 1.

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dismantled.⁶²

The camp played baseball and hockey matches with teams from other CCC camps and with Blackduck, held dances in the town, and participated at a local carnival. In August 1938 over 200 enrollees from the camp along with both the Army and Forest Service officers aided in the search for a missing person. For two consecutive years (1938-39) Company 708 won first prize for its educational exhibit at the Paul Bunyan Winter Carnival in Bemidji. The exhibit described educational activities at the camp, depicted the work of the camp's 4-H and Audubon Clubs, and displayed kayaks made at the camp along with lathe work, and oil paintings. All six CCC camps from Beltrami County participated in a special exhibit at the Minnesota State Fair in St. Paul in September 1937. The display included "examples of art and handicrafts, models of representative work projects, charts showing educational progress and the ever-lowering accident rate for the boys, a collection of camp insignia and a motion picture showing what happens to a boy from the day he visits his county selection agent until he is discharged to accept employment."⁶³ In April 1939 the camp held its annual open house to celebrate the sixth birthday of the CCC. The open house was not held in 1938 because the camp was under quarantine for chicken pox.

An article in *The Blackduck American*, dated December 21, 1939, further defined the camp's relationship with the community:

Holiday leave is arranged so that each enrollee will have an equal number of days at home, at the same time providing for an adequate crew at camp, which is maintained constantly to answer possible emergency calls of public nature, such as fire, search for missing persons, and emergency road clearance in case of sickness. . .

The Forest Service owes much to its patrons, friends, and local businessmen for cooperation and harmonious working association during the past year. For this the Service is grateful, and the entire personnel of the Blackduck District unites in this expression of kindly regard, and Greetings of the Season.

Not surprisingly, the community reacted strongly when the possibility of closing the Rabideau Camp was announced. An article entitled, "Blackduck May Lose Rebedew (sic) Lake Camp,"⁶⁴ in *The Blackduck American*, dated May 29, 1941, stated:

Blackduck may possibly lose the CCC camp that for several years has operated at Rebedew (sic) Lake. This is the word that has been received by the U.S. Forest Service here and plans are being made for the discontinuance of the camp. Efforts are being made, however, by the Blackduck Community Club to get in touch with the proper authorities and get them to reconsider the action. A flood of telegrams have been sent the past two days to the national director of the CCC and others in an effort to continue the camp in operation here.

Their efforts to retain the camp proved unsuccessful and the camp's ultimate closure was noted in a subsequent article, dated June 12, 1941, entitled, "Rebedew CCC Camp To Go Out Saturday," that stated:

Blackduck will lose its CCC camp next Saturday, June 14, according to official word received by the officers in charge the first of the week. The last working day for the enrollees of this camp will be Friday. Officers in charge and others of the personnel will be transferred to other camps in Northern Minnesota most of them already having been notified of their transfer.⁶⁵

⁶²Articles in *The Blackduck American* would occasionally announce that enrollees had successfully found employment and were leaving the camp, which was one of the goals of the CCC program.

⁶³"Beltrami County CCC Work Exhibited at State Fair," *The Blackduck American*, 1 September 1937, 1.

⁶⁴The word "Rabideau" was consistently misspelled as "Rebedew" in *The Blackduck American*, perhaps because it approximated the phonetic pronunciation of the word.

⁶⁵*The Blackduck American*, 29 May 1941.

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The closure of the camp was related to overall CCC enrollment throughout the United States. As enrollment fluctuated, the number of camps was adjusted accordingly. The program had been diminishing since its peak in the mid-1930s as the economy improved and with the shift to wartime activities until it formally ended in June 1942.

The University of Illinois

After the Rabideau Camp closed, the property was left vacant for the remainder of the war. Then in August 1945, four representatives from the Department of Civil Engineering, College of Engineering, of the University of Illinois at Urbana visited the Chippewa National Forest in the hope of finding a suitable facility for use as a summer surveying school for university students. The party included Professors W.C. Huntington, W.H. Rayner, C.C. Wiley, and G.H. Dell. Such a facility was needed because it was felt that areas locally available near the university were unsuitable for practice in topographic and route surveying. No bodies of water were available for hydrographic surveying and no streams were accessible for practice in stream gaging. In addition, student schedules were only long enough for brief exercises in surveying and inclement weather also interfered with the effectiveness of current surveying classes. After sites in Illinois and Michigan were explored with no success, the university began to seek a location in either Wisconsin or Minnesota.

Four CCC camps were inspected in the Chippewa National Forest: Pike Bay, Bena, Cut Foot Sioux, and Rabideau. Interestingly, the Bena and Cut Foot Sioux camps were still occupied by German prisoners of war, but it was expected that the camps would be vacated by the end of the year.⁶⁶ During the visit, university officials took several photographs of the Rabideau Camp. The grounds had become somewhat overgrown, but the university described the site as "extremely advantageous" and noted that:

The buildings are frame with drop siding on wood studs with trussed roofs. Four of the major buildings are lined with varnished plywood. The remaining buildings, except the garages, are lined with Celotex with a wood wainscot three feet high. The floors are matched strip flooring. All of the buildings are in excellent condition, with no roof leaks, and are almost spotlessly clean. Wood-burning stoves are provided for heating all buildings.⁶⁷

It was a fortuitous day for the Rabideau Camp when the University of Illinois concluded that the property would be the best suited for its summer school.⁶⁸ Correspondence continued with the Forest Service throughout the remainder of 1945 that included discussions about various modifications that would need to be made to the camp as well as the terms of the special use permit issued for the use of the property. Finally, on December 11, 1945, the Forest Service received a telegram from Professor W.C. Huntington that stated, "Trustees approved camp and form of lease. Will write." The annual fee was placed at \$50.00, although there was an additional \$20.00 monthly fee for any building that housed families of university faculty. Officially, the Forest Service would continue to refer to the site as "Organization Site, University of Illinois 8/31/45," the date of the special use permit.

The selection of the camp by the University of Illinois was announced with a banner headline in *The Blackduck American* on December 13, 1945. And just as the community had welcomed the arrival of the CCC, the article

⁶⁶The Day Lake CCC Camp was also used to house German prisoners of war.

⁶⁷This statement was included in a "Memorandum Concerning The Summer Surveying Camp Proposed by the Department of Civil Engineering" dated October 8, 1945, located at the University Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, in the Civil Engineering Subject File Record Series 11/5/1.

⁶⁸Iowa State University may have had a similar program at the Wirt CCC Camp and the University of Minnesota may have conducted a program near Cass Lake.

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concluded with the statement that, "There is no doubt but [that] the people of Blackduck will welcome the establishment of this camp and will put forth every effort to establish and maintain cordial relations with the students, the educators and their staff through the years to come." Sixty students attended the first summer program that began on July 15, 1946 and continued for eight weeks until September 7, 1946. In 1947 there were 108 students at the camp and a total camp population of 140.

Close ties continued with the community, as had been the case with the CCC. The Blackduck Civic and Commerce Association entertained university faculty throughout the 1950s and in 1952 the group sponsored an official welcome when the students arrived. Conferences were held at the camp as well. A National Surveying Conference was held in 1952 and a workshop on Land Tenure was held in 1953. The university began scheduling a second summer session in 1955, the 10th anniversary of its program at the camp. In 1958 the university's Department of Forestry initiated a summer program at the camp and the facility was shared with the Department of Civil Engineering until 1964 when the Department of Forestry became the sole user. Record enrollment may have occurred in 1958 when 138 students attended.

On November 14, 1972, Professor Lorenz wrote the Forest Service indicating the interest on the part of the Department of Forestry in continuing to use the Rabideau Camp but also noted that, "Every passing year the camp becomes more difficult to maintain in ready repair, especially the plumbing." In a letter to the Forest Service dated March 15, 1973, Professor Lorenz wrote:

It is with deep regret that I inform you that the Department of Forestry, University of Illinois, will not renew its lease on Camp Rabideau this summer or in subsequent summers. The Civil Engineers at the University of Illinois commenced using the camp in 1946 and the Foresters in 1958. The old camp has served us well over the years. We owe a debt of gratitude to the U.S. Forest Service and its staff that made our annual visits so comfortable and rewarding.⁶⁹

The university's special use permit for the Rabideau Camp was formally terminated on June 21, 1973.⁷⁰ Discussions about the future of the camp occurred during the 1970s, with options ranging from complete preservation to total demolition. On June 16, 1976, the Rabideau Camp was listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The Forest Service subsequently developed a management plan for the camp that resulted in the restoration of the current Mess Hall, Hospital, Army Officer's Quarters, and one barracks. In recent years, additional buildings have been restored or stabilized.

CCC Camp Architecture and Comparative Analysis

CCC camps of the Depression Era consisted of three distinct types: tent camps, rigid camps, and portable camps. In each case, the camps were built to U.S. Army guidelines and specifications and thus a certain uniformity existed regardless of location. However, the design and appearance of the camps varied according to location, available building materials, terrain, and the time of construction.

Tent Camps - Tent camps were often erected as living quarters until more permanent buildings were constructed. Yet in warmer regions tents were sometimes used for the camp's duration, and frames and wooden floors were included to provide greater comfort. Thirty-six canvas tents were generally used to accommodate a

⁶⁹The university transferred its summer program to the Isabella Environmental Learning Center on Minnesota's Superior National Forest.

⁷⁰In addition to the sources noted, the information concerning the university's use of the camp is located in a file on the Rabideau Camp at the Iron Range Research Center in Chisholm, Minnesota, and the University Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, in the Civil Engineering Subject File Record Series 11/5/1.

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200-man camp, with five men per tent. The average tent size was sixteen by sixteen feet. When tents were used for housing during the winter, or even moderate weather, wooden siding or clapboards were sometimes added to a height of two feet, six inches. A wood-burning stove would also be installed near the center of the tent. Tents were sometimes used for the barracks only, but were combined with more durable, wood-frame construction for the principal buildings such as the mess hall, hospital, and latrine.

Rigid Camps - Initially canvas tents may have been intended for all CCC camps. But the Army and an industry group known as the American Forest Products, Inc. began demonstrating the cost feasibility of lumber products. The potential for the lumber industry was clear. By November 1933, the Army's plans for CCC camps with lumber buildings had been formally accepted. Rigid camps featuring standard frame construction became the typical construction method. Locally hired labor was preferred for camp construction in order to insure good public relations and the acceptance of CCC camps by nearby communities. The buildings were usually simple, rectangular structures with low-pitch gable roofs. Siding was typically clapboard, shiplap, or board and batten. Roofing consisted of roll roofing or shingles. Windows were usually multi-pane casements or hopper-type. Regional styles or variations resulted in notable exceptions to the expected appearance of a CCC camp. Several camps built in northern Minnesota featured vertical log construction. The Leeds CCC Camp buildings in Utah were also unusual as they were built with stone.

Portable Camps - Experimentation with portable buildings began in 1934 because of the high salvage value possible since a camp could be dismantled, transported, and re-erected. It was estimated that twelve railroad cars were required to ship a complete camp and 100 truckloads for transportation from the railhead to the campsite. Opinions were divided over the use of portable buildings and many camp commanders did not favor them. But in 1937 portable buildings were adopted as the standard building type. The portable buildings did not necessarily differ significantly in dimension or appearance from the rigid buildings, but they were bolted together in sections.⁷¹

Side camps, also known as spike camps, were used to house a small number of men working on projects located a significant distance from the base camp. Side camps proved efficient because it was not practical to transport the men back and forth to the base camp each day. These camps usually consisted of tents.

Regardless whether a camp featured tent, rigid, or portable construction, a typical camp housed 200 and would generally consist of at least twenty buildings, including the appropriate number of barracks, a mess hall, hospital, latrine and shower building, office, staff quarters for the army and technical services, a recreation building, and a variety of service and support buildings, all arranged in relatively close proximity. A typical building was 20' wide and 60'-75' long. The mess was usually a larger T-shaped building with the kitchen located in the leg of the T. Core buildings, such as the mess hall and hospital, were usually positioned at the center of the camp and flanked by the barracks. Service buildings, such as shops and garages, were usually located at the perimeter. There were many variations in camp layout and it does not appear that specific layouts were required. Many camps exhibit highly rectilinear designs, while in some camps the buildings were organized in pinwheel fashion. It is likely that the exact layout was largely determined by the specifics of the site.

However, CCC camps were never considered permanent structures and the minimal frame structures were almost always destroyed or dismantled after a particular project was completed. For this reason very few buildings survive from the nation's CCC camps, In Minnesota, for example, a pump house survives from camp SP-19 at Itasca State Park, while a number of portable buildings from the park were shipped to Alaska where

⁷¹Alison, T. Otis, *The Forest Service and the Civilian Conservation Corps: 1933-42*, 71-81.

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they were used during World War II. Two barracks from camp NP-1 at St. Croix State Park are still extant although they have been moved to the residential complex and placed end-to-end to serve as a garage. It is believed perhaps up to three buildings survive from camp S-52 at Cusson. Occasionally foundation remains from a camp may be found such as on the site of the Day Lake CCC Camp. It is likely that many such CCC camp remnants exist throughout the country.

The following CCC camps in the United States have been identified in an effort to determine the number of surviving camp buildings and their relative integrity:⁷²

Arkansas

Damascus CCC Camp – A stone entry arch, an arched stone menu board, and a well are the only surviving elements from the camp.

Hollis CCC Camp – Various remnant features from the camp survive including foundations, walkways, and masonry ruins.

Ozone CCC Camp – As with the Hollis CCC Camp, only a number of concrete and masonry features survive from this camp.

Michigan

Camp Gibbs – Camp Gibbs is located eight miles northwest of Iron River in the Ottawa National Forest. The camp contains a large number of original buildings and structures including the mess hall, four barracks, the bath house, the army office, the dispensary, the education building, the power house, the supply house, and two garages. After the CCC vacated the camp in 1941, the camp was used by the Michigan State Department of Social Welfare as a work camp for transients until 1968. In 1969 ownership of the camp buildings was transferred to the Iron County Sportsman's Club which used the camp for sporting and recreational activities. The club was reorganized as the Camp Gibbs Recreation Area in 1974. In 1994 Camp Gibbs was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The camp remains in its original wilderness setting with its unpaved road system still in place. However, a number of original buildings have been demolished and a number of new buildings and structures have been introduced to the site. Moreover, the exteriors of nearly all of the buildings have been resided with horizontal asphalt siding, which replaced the original tar paper siding that was held in place with vertical wood strips. In addition, the interiors of the majority of the buildings have been extensively remodeled. The extensive changes to Camp Gibbs reduce its integrity in comparison to Rabideau.

Camp Rock Harbor (Isle Royale National Park) – Only the root cellar remains from the CCC camp at Rock Harbor. Several CCC camp buildings were moved from the camp to commercial fishery and residential sites and survive in their new locations.

Camp Windigo (Isle Royale National Park) – The surviving remnants of this CCC camp include two employee housing units, a trail crew bunk house, a laundry building, and a foundation. (It is not likely that "employee housing unit" and "trail crew bunk house" represent the historic names of these buildings.) A carpenter's shop was constructed in 1969 using salvaged CCC panels. However, one of the housing units appears to have been built in 1957 using CCC pre-fabricated sections and there are at least ten buildings and structures at the site that either pre or post-date the CCC era. The trail crew bunk house retains the highest integrity of the surviving

⁷²This information was compiled from a survey of all State Historic Preservation Offices in the country.

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buildings.

Minnesota

Norris Camp – In addition to the Rabideau camp, the only other notable collection of CCC camp buildings in Minnesota is found at the Norris Camp, S-56, which was only briefly occupied by the CCC before the camp was transferred to the Resettlement Administration (RA), which greatly expanded the property. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1994, ten buildings built by the CCC may survive, yet considerable alteration and new construction occurred under the Resettlement Administration, as well as construction from the modern era, and the camp's significance is primarily associated with the Resettlement Administration rather than the CCC.⁷³

Montana

Birch Creek CCC Camp – The 1982 National Register nomination for this camp lists eight of fifteen buildings extant, although only six retain their original character. The buildings feature board and batten siding and rather steeply pitched roofs. An interesting feature at the camp is a series of stone retaining walls. The Montana State Historic Preservation Office noted, “there has been some loss of integrity to the site since the time it was nominated. Now owned by Western Montana College, their environmental education program built a large meeting/lodge building at the top of the hill, which intrudes upon the setting.”⁷⁴

Fort Missoula Historic District – While not a CCC camp, the Fort includes seven buildings constructed for the Rocky Mountain Regional Civilian Conservation Corps Headquarters. It is not clear how many buildings were originally constructed, although the CCC also constructed an entrance with two stone pylons and a stone monument. Many buildings were constructed at the Fort both before and after the CCC era and thus a number of themes are represented at the Fort. This collection of buildings serving as a CCC headquarters facility is likely a very rare property type, and was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1987.⁷⁵ However, because of this distinction in property type, Fort Missoula is not comparable to Rabideau as an example of a CCC camp.

Camp Needmore – The camp was established in 1935 and remained a CCC camp until mid-1936. From 1946 to 1973 it was operated as an organization camp by the Carter American Legion Post #60. In 1973 the buildings were transferred from the Forest Service to Carter County, Montana. The camp retains only a few buildings from the CCC era, the best-preserved of which is a T-shaped mess hall that appears to be in very good condition. It features rough, unpainted, board and batten siding and a medium pitch gable roof. Two large barracks also survive from the camp but they were split to create five barracks and a bathhouse.⁷⁶

New Hampshire

Bear Brook CCC Camp – The Bear Brook CCC Camp was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1992 and consists of seven or eight of the camp's original thirteen buildings. The buildings are generally

⁷³Rolf T. Anderson, “Norris Camp.” National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. 20 April 1993.

⁷⁴Joan Louise Brownell, “Birch Creek CCC Camp F-60.” National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. March 1982. Letter from Chere Jiusto to Dena Sanford dated 14 January 2002.

⁷⁵James R. McDonald and Patricia Bick, “Fort Missoula Historic District.” National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. August 1986. Several buildings also appear to survive from the Minnesota State CCC Headquarters in Grand Rapids (similar to Fort Missoula), although the site has not been evaluated as it is also not comparable to Rabideau.

⁷⁶Jane Pedrotti, “Camp Needmore.” March 2002.

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rectangular frame buildings with gable roofs. Most of the buildings are clad with wood shingles although the original sheathing was simply tarpaper. The condition of the buildings appears to be good, although some modifications have been made, and today several of the buildings provide space for two museums, a park nature center, and a residence. The remaining buildings are used as part of a state park maintenance facility. There is only one non-contributing structure within the two-acre historic district, although newer maintenance buildings are located immediately outside the boundary and adjacent to the historic buildings.⁷⁷ The introduction of several new uses and the impact of new construction on the setting, feeling, and association reduce Bear Brook's integrity in comparison to Rabideau.

South Dakota

Camp Lodge CCC Camp – Located in Custer State Park, Camp Lodge is considered the most intact camp complex in the state. Several original buildings survive including a large U-shaped infirmary and three barracks organized around an unpaved circular drive. The buildings appear to be in good condition and the site has been determined eligible for the National Register. Today the camp is used to house the operations of the Black Hills Playhouse, a summer theater associated with the University of South Dakota, and some buildings are used to house prison labor. The playhouse building was constructed in the 1950s. A barracks building was constructed in the 1990s. In addition, new construction on a nearby hilltop overlooks the camp. The integrity of Camp Lodge is lessened due to changes in original use and the impact of new construction.

Camp Custer – Two log cabins, built as quarters for officers and foresters at Camp Custer still exist and are in private ownership.

Camp NP-1 – A building used for officers' quarters is now used by Wind Cave National Park.

Camp SCS-4 – Located in Huron on the State Fairgrounds, a two-story building used as a barracks for the camp is now used for poultry and small animal displays at the State Fair.

There are also foundations and remnants of fireplaces from camp buildings scattered throughout the Black Hills.⁷⁸

Utah

Leeds CCC Camp – The Leeds CCC Camp was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1993 and consists of four buildings and one structure. The buildings are unique in that they feature coursed sandstone construction. Several features from the camp are outside the National Register boundary. These include the stone entrance piers, some terracing, the frame horse barn, and the foundation of the pump house and the pond, although the nomination notes that they have been substantially altered over the years. The nomination also notes that, "Construction of the nearby I-15 freeway reportedly destroyed several remaining historic structures in the 1970s, although many original buildings were apparently removed soon after the camp closed in the early 1940s."⁷⁹

⁷⁷Marlene Elizabeth Heck, "Bear Brook State Park Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Camp Historic District." National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. March 1992.

⁷⁸Michelle L. Dennis, "Federal Relief Construction in South Dakota, 1929-1941." South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office. 1998. 94-96. Correspondence between Lynda B. Schwan, South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office, and Susan Roth, Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office. October 2003.

⁷⁹June T. Foster and Charles M. Shepherd, "Leeds CCC Camp Historic District." National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. December 1992.

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Washington

North Bend CCC Camp – The North Bend CCC Camp is currently known as Camp Waskowitz and is operated as an environmental education center. The camp contains ten contributing buildings and two contributing objects. The camp's 1992 King County Landmark Registration Form notes that the camp has only lost one building, the machine shop. The buildings feature board and batten siding and medium pitch gable roofs. The camp is quite intact and the buildings appear to be in good condition. However, there are also ten non-contributing buildings and four non-contributing structures that appear to impact the camp's integrity.⁸⁰ The impact of the high number of non-contributing resources on the setting lessens North Bend's overall significance, in comparison to Rabideau.

Camp Carnation – The registration form for the North Bend CCC Camp mentions that Camp Carnation is the only other CCC camp remaining in King County. However, Camp Carnation is described as significantly altered and no longer retaining integrity of original design, workmanship, or feeling.

West Virginia

Camp Alvon – Camp Alvon was a CCC camp from November 1934 to December 1935. At that time the camp was acquired by the U.S. Forest Service and renamed after the supervisor of the Monongahela National Forest, Arthur Wood. The camp continues to be known as Camp Wood. In 1937, the camp was made available to West Virginia University for summer programs in forestry and later geology. The university owns the camp buildings but the land is leased from the U.S. Forest Service through a special use permit. Several buildings from the camp may survive, including the current dining hall and three or four barracks-type buildings. These buildings appear to be in good condition. Two buildings, a staff cottage and the women's dormitory, appear to date from a later period. Although several resources survive, the camp does not retain as many resources as Rabideau, nor is an outstanding representative example of the CCC camp property-type.

Camp Thornwood – Located in the Monongahela National Forest, this camp is now known as Camp Pocahontas. It has been the site of the National Youth Science Camp for the past thirty-seven years. Several original camp buildings survive including the recreation building and several barracks. The recreation building appears to be in original condition, however, smaller buildings have been formed from the barracks, each approximately 60' by 21'. Several modern buildings have also been constructed, including a dining hall and bathhouse. Other original camp features include flagstone walkways and the original Camp Thornwood entrance sign.

It is not surprising that few CCC camps survive since they were never considered permanent structures. However, when considering the number of camp buildings that were actually constructed, the surviving resources are remarkably rare. If each of the nation's 4,500 camps averaged just fifteen buildings, nearly 70,000 would have been constructed. In fact, it is likely that each camp averaged twenty buildings, bringing the total number of CCC camp buildings in the United States even higher.

While all surviving CCC camp resources noted above are important, the Mount Morrison, Bear Brook, Gibbs, North Bend, and Rabideau Camps stand apart as the best examples of surviving CCC camps in the United States. Although no one camp has survived unscathed, Rabideau Camp stands out with its high degree of integrity, and contains an outstanding collection of resources that not only remain in their pristine original

⁸⁰Erin Younger and Leonard Garfield, "Camp North Bend, F-85 (Company 2911)." King County Landmark Registration Form. 23 July 1992.

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setting, but which remain largely unaltered. In *The Tree Army*, author Stan Cohen acknowledges the importance of Rabideau, stating that, "the best preserved original CCC Camp, Camp Rabideau, is located six miles south of Blackduck, Minnesota in the Chippewa National Forest." As mentioned previously, Mount Morrison may also be a good candidate for NHL designation, following additional analysis and evaluation. If Mount Morrison were determined to meet the NHL criteria for designation, it would augment the story of the evolution of the CCC as a New Deal program from its initial focus on forest management to recreational development.

The CCC and the History of the Conservation Movement in the United States

Scholarly research on the CCC has generally focused on the success and popularity of the New Deal program, the employment provided to enrollees and their families, the tremendous accomplishments in the nation's parks and forests, or the administrative history of the program. And while the CCC is generally considered one of the great conservation programs in the history of the United States, little had been written about its context within the nation's early conservation movement or its impact or influence on the modern environmental movement.

Recent research by Cornelius M. Maher attempts to place the CCC within the broader context of the conservation movement and suggests the CCC facilitated the emergence of modern environmentalism.⁸¹ His dissertation examines the transformation of the American conservation movement during the Great Depression and New Deal era. It does so by analyzing the history of the CCC and explains how the conservation work by the CCC altered American thinking about the natural world. It argues that CCC played an instrumental role in bridging the transition from Progressive Era conservation to post-World War II environmentalism. He maintains the CCC fostered this shift from conservation to environmentalism on two different, yet related, levels. First, the CCC popularized the Progressive Era conservation movement, which had been led by an elite group of individuals, all of whom were interested above all in the "efficient production of natural resources." The second way the CCC helped bridge the conservation and environmental movements was by helping to redefine conservation itself to include issues related to wilderness preservation, ecological balance, and outdoor recreation, all of which became central to postwar environmentalists. Thus, by both popularizing conservation and broadening its concerns, the CCC not only planted trees but also helped sow the seeds of the American environmental movement.⁸²

Maher begins his analysis by discussing conservation in the Progressive Era. Unlike other reform efforts during that era, an emerging middle class did not orchestrate the conservation movement. Instead, scientific professionals, government bureaucrats, and businessmen directed the effort. Perhaps no single individual better epitomized the movement, and its elite composition, than Gifford Pinchot. Born to a wealthy Connecticut family, Pinchot graduated from Yale, traveled to Europe to study forestry, and began to promote the scientific management of the country's timber supplies; first as the timber manager at Biltmore (NHL, 1963), the Vanderbilt's family estate, and later as a forester for the federal government. He viewed nature in strict utilitarian terms. Soon after he became Chief Forester for the Forest Service, his "gospel of efficiency" became the guiding philosophy for the Forest Service and the great majority of progressive conservationists as well. A similar but ultimately different point of view had emerged in the Progressive Era. Its vision was promoted by Californian John Muir, whose ideals and work towards conservation had begun before Pinchot entered the field of forestry. Muir, the founder of the Sierra Club, believed in preserving nature's beauty for its own sake as well as for the spiritual sake of humankind. Ultimately, the movement was splintered between conservationist and

⁸¹Cornelius M. Maher, "Planting More Than Trees: The Civilian Conservation Corps and the Roots of the American Environmental Movement, 1929-1942" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 2001).

⁸²Maher, v.

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preservationist camps.⁸³

Franklin Roosevelt's experiences at his own Springwood estate and in the New York state senate indicated that his thinking corresponded more closely with that of Pinchot. This continued when he became Governor of New York, long after the Progressive era had come to an end. When Roosevelt created the CCC, he was clearly influenced by his involvement in the Progressive Era conservation movement. Yet he also had a long history with youth relief during and after the Progressive Era that equally, if not to a greater extent, influenced his thinking about the CCC. But while Roosevelt the conservationist saw the countryside's natural resources as sickly and in need of scientific management, Roosevelt the unemployment reformer believed the countryside could potentially rejuvenate young urban men. Combining these two concepts was a highly original idea.

Initially, the Corps was primarily involved in reforestation, timber stand improvement, and forest protection in national forests. But by 1935 an increasing number of camps were involved in recreational development. In time, two distinct New Deal landscapes began to emerge; one restorative and one recreational, both of which reflected Progressive Era ideologies. But while implementing the many conservation programs and creating these landscapes, another goal of the Corps was to educate the enrollees to become what Robert Fechner called "conservation conscious." This was accomplished through on the job training and more formal after-hours educational programs. In the spring of 1935 the Corps developed a comprehensive national curriculum and formulated eight objectives for its evening instruction, the second of which involved "instilling in the enrollees a deeper consciousness of the importance of conserving the nation's resources."⁸⁴ Later many enrollees pursued professional careers in conservation.

The education of the CCC enrollees both on the job and in camp classrooms, and their entrance into professional careers in natural resource conservation, represented a significant shift in the history of the American conservation movement. Progressive Era conservationists were primarily an elite group of trained professionals who believed in the "efficient use of natural resources." The Corps was taking a major step in broadening the conservation movement by exposing the minds of three million enrollees to the practice and theory of natural resource conservation.

Another trend was the impact of the CCC on the communities surrounding the camps. The close relationship that the Rabideau Camp developed with the nearby community of Blackduck was typical. Initially, economic relationships began to form by furnishing labor and construction materials for the camps, on-going purchases of supplies, and finally through enrollee expenditures. In time, local residents were introduced to the potential benefits provided by the conservation movement, such as reforestation. Newly developed recreational areas also helped bring tourist dollars to the local economy on an on-going basis. Ultimately, the CCC changed the way local residents thought about their relationship to both their natural surroundings and the federal government.⁸⁵

Once the CCC was established, the American landscape began to be transformed by the federal government. During its nine-year existence, the CCC planted more than two billion trees, slowed soil erosion on forty million acres, and developed eight hundred new state parks. Twenty-three new national forests were created and existing forests were increased by twenty-eight million acres. The Corps constructed more than ten thousand small reservoirs, forty-six thousand vehicular bridges, and thirteen thousand miles of hiking trails. All told it is estimated that the CCC altered more than 118,000,000 acres of land. CCC Director Robert Fechner

⁸³ Maher, 43-48.

⁸⁴ Maher, 172.

⁸⁵ Maher, 216.

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explained in 1939 that the Corps “constructively altered the landscape of the United States.”⁸⁶ When coupled with municipal building projects sponsored by New Deal agencies like the Public Works Administration and the Work Progress Administration, Americans could hardly avoid encountering the physical impact of the New Deal.

The public was also influenced by the extensive media coverage of the CCC in print, on film, and on the radio that publicized not only the New Deal programs and the landscape changes, but also the conservation movement as a whole. The CCC’s public relations campaign used every available media, sending out hundreds of press releases to newspapers across the country, dozens of feature articles to nationally syndicated magazines, and numerous pamphlets on CCC projects to forestry, farm, and conservation organizations, as well as to community groups such as chambers of commerce and town councils. The Corps even created its own production company that by 1935 employed twenty-one people and made more than thirty films.⁸⁷ This coverage helped to publicize the notion of conservation as the efficient use of natural resources to a wider American audience. In addition, as the general public began to admire the CCC’s forestry projects, they began to replicate its work. Tree planting became popular with many organizations and even the nation’s schools began incorporating conservation into their curriculums. The number of conservation organizations also began to grow.

In 1939 Franklin Roosevelt commented, “I consider it a matter of great significance that now, according to the results of a recent poll of public opinion, the conservation of natural resources stands second in point of interest in the thoughts of Americans in all walks of life.”⁸⁸ And clearly the concept of conservation was becoming increasingly popular with the American people. Yet this view of conservation was perceived as the efficient use of natural resources. As the Corps expanded its work into the nation’s parks, the meaning of conservation was also expanded in the minds of the American public.

A CCC publication explained that, “In recent years an even broader concept of conservation has developed . . . (which) has made clear the justification and necessity of preserving and conserving scenery for its social value.”

In promoting recreational areas as social resources, the CCC suggested that such developments were necessary to restore the health and vigor of the American people. Another CCC publication noted, “The complexity of modern life itself creates the need for recreation.” This alternative form of conservation, one emphasizing human instead of natural resources, was a central component of the CCC and clearly apparent from its inception and its goal of “restoring” its enrollees - the young men of America. As early as 1935 it was noted, “The park phase of the (CCC) took on great popularity . . . because it combined conservation of resources for economic security and enjoyment of these resources in the furtherance of human happiness.”⁸⁹ These concepts were clearly understood locally as seen in an article about a project on Minnesota’s Chippewa National Forest to develop sites for summer homes. The article noted:

The National Forests, originally established for the conservation of natural resources, have long since been recognized and developed by the Forest Service for the conservation of human resources. . . . There have also been developed certain areas expressly to promote the health and peace of mind of mankind.⁹⁰

⁸⁶Maher, 79.

⁸⁷Maher, 247-248.

⁸⁸Maher, 260.

⁸⁹Maher, 267.

⁹⁰“Home Development on the Chippewa,” *The Blackduck American*, 30 March 1938, 1.

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The impact of the CCC on its enrollees was similarly acknowledged. During the celebrations commemorating the sixth anniversary of the CCC, an article about an “open house” at the camps in the Chippewa National Forest explained:

It celebrates the sixth successful year of the founding of the Civilian Conservation Corps, which has been of great help not only in keeping our forest in good condition, building roads and keeping them in good repair, publicizing our national forests, but also in building up the morale of the boys and young men of our nation, and giving them a good outlet for their abilities.⁹¹

When CCC camps in Minnesota were closing as the nation’s attention became focused on the war effort, local editors and publishers organized to protest. They commented that the camps were an essential part of the national defense program and also that, “The CCC camps are vital to a region in which conservation and rehabilitation of both land and youth is so urgently needed.”⁹²

For all the popularity that the CCC generated, however, by the mid-to-late 1930s a number of critics began to oppose CCC projects for failing to take into account other concerns such as wilderness preservation or the concept of ecological balance. The result was a national debate on the very meaning of conservation that expanded the concept of conservation even further, and in the process helped redefine the movement. It should be kept in mind, however, that while the CCC, through its central administration, was publicly promoting the concept of conservation, the actual Corps projects were developed and supervised by other federal agencies, mainly the U.S. Forest Service, the National Park Service, and the Soil Conservation Service.

For example, a “skyline” drive proposed for the Great Smoky Mountains by the National Park Service was criticized because of its negative impact on the wilderness. The idea that wilderness was worth preserving was a concept that had been gradually emerging. Truck trails built in National Forests to assist in fire prevention were criticized, and the Wilderness Society, established in 1935, blamed the Corps’ recreational development projects in national parks and forests for destroying primitive wilderness areas.

Another form of criticism came from the nation’s scientific community. Aldo Leopold, a University of Wisconsin professor of game management who had supervised a number of CCC projects throughout the United States, criticized an extensive drainage project involving the Atlantic tidal marsh. In 1938 he commented that the project was done in the name of mosquito control but it threatened the wildlife that inhabited the marshes. His primary criticism was that such projects lacked coordination and he noted “the ecological and esthetic limitations of ‘scientific’ technology. . . .”⁹³ His reference to the term “ecology” was unfamiliar to most Americans at the time. This science was just emerging, primarily through scientists at several U.S. universities who were studying the interrelated dynamics of plant and animal communities. This idea of biological balance gave new meaning to the conservation movement.

Critics argued that the CCC needed to incorporate wilderness preservation and ecological balance into its conservation efforts. Federal agencies began to react to the criticism. The National Park Service, for example, used CCC funds to hire wildlife biologists to monitor Corps conservation projects in national parks.

Even though the CCC came to an end in June 1942, it propelled the more broad-based movement it forged during the New Deal era into the post-World War II period. Franklin Roosevelt’s CCC helped transform the American conservation movement. By popularizing the conservation of natural resources among CCC

⁹¹“CCC Holds Its 6th Anniversary,” *The Cass County Pioneer*, 5 April 1939, 1.

⁹²“CCC is Vital to Region Say Local Editors,” *The Walker Pilot*, 18 July 1941, 6.

⁹³Maher, 290-292.

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enrollees, residents of communities located near the camps and project sites, and the American public as a whole, the CCC helped transform what had been a narrow, elite-based movement during the Progressive Era into a more grassroot phenomenon during the post war period. The CCC also helped to redefine conservation during the 1930s and early 1940s by sparking a national debate over the very meaning of conservation that ultimately incorporated concerns about wilderness preservation, ecological balance, and outdoor recreation into the conservation movement's agenda. This notion that the Corps helped lay much of the groundwork for postwar environmentalism, a grass-roots movement with expanded environmental concerns, was not lost on those most involved in the New Deal program. As stated on the letterhead of the National Association of Civilian Conservation Corps, "Before Earth Day, There was the CCC."⁹⁴

The Rabideau CCC Camp is nationally significant for its association with the complex historical themes of the New Deal, the Civilian Conservation Corps, and the conservation movement in the United States. It reflects pivotal events in American history and remains a rare and evocative property preserved in its pristine historic setting.

⁹⁴Maher, 369-370.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
 Previously Listed in the National Register.
 Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
 Designated a National Historic Landmark.
 Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: #MN-147
 Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State Agency
 Federal Agency
 Local Government
 University
 Other (Specify Repository):

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: 111.65 acres

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	15	383090	5277480
B	15	383880	5277480
C	15	386860	5276680
D	15	383070	5276680

Verbal Boundary Description:

Lot 1 (31.65 acres) and the West 1/2 (80 acres) of the Northeast quarter of Section 13, Township 148, Range 31.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary includes the original lands and buildings historically associated with the Rabideau CCC Camp. The original parcel of land purchased for the construction of the camp remains completely intact and facilitates the preservation of the camp's pristine wilderness setting. The camp's integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association is exceptional and remarkably evocative of the historic period due to the absence of any significant modern intrusions or encroachment, or major alterations to the landscape. The camp also retains a high level of integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. The camp contains an astonishing number of buildings and structures when considering the inherent fragility of CCC camp buildings and their scarcity nationwide. Alterations to the camp's buildings have also been minimal.

RABIDEAU CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS (CCC) CAMP

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

11. FORM PREPARED BY

Name/Title: Rolf T. Anderson

Address: 212 West 36th Street
Minneapolis, MN 55408

Telephone: (612) 824-7807

Date: November 15, 2003

Edited by: Dena Sanford
Midwest Regional Office
National Park Service
601 Riverfront Drive
Omaha, NE 68102

Telephone: (402) 661-1944

Patty Henry
National Park Service
National Historic Landmarks Survey
1849 C St., N.W. (2280)
Washington, DC 20240

Telephone: (202) 354-2216

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS SURVEY
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