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The C.C.C. in Southeast Louisiana

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"COMES the Dawn" of June 4, 1933, and with it the arrival of a special train bearing 200 enlisted C. C. C. men, regular army personnel equipment, supplies, and baggage. Trucks start moving, tools are issued, and men start cleaning up the camp site. Stoves are erected. Groceries and supplies are broken out. Noon—and hot meals are served. By night tents are erected and the boys are settled. Thus is the first C. C. C. camp in Louisiana established and the greatest experiment in forest conservation the world has ever known becomes a local reality.

Ten days later, on June 14, the first work crews rolled out of the camp for the woods equipped with axes, saws, brush hooks, and machetes to engage in roadside fire hazard reduction. The ten-day interim had been taken up with camp erection, arrival of tools, and planning of field work; and no small amount of speculation by foresters, landowners, and local residents as to what, if anything, in the way of woods work would be accomplished. All such speculation is now a thing of the past, for any adverse criticism has been eliminated by the actual woods accomplishments.

As there are very few National Forests in the deep South and still fewer state forests, a large percentage of C. C. C. camps are located on privately owned lands.

On such lands the work that can be carried on is very definitely stipulated. It consists entirely of fire prevention, which includes the building of truck trails to make all parts of the areas readily accessible for fire fighters, the clearing of fire lines and fire breaks to assist in holding fires to small areas, the erection of towers and telephone lines to detect the fires and dispatch men to them for suppression, roadside fire hazard reduction, emergency fire suppression, and miscellaneous work which is allied with the above.

It is unusually difficult to compare the work being accomplished by the various camps in the South, as each has special problems which are not common to any other camp. Not only do the type of land, type of timber, and degree of fire hazard vary, but the previous land policies vary from lands which were unprotected to those which were protected by a skeleton organ-
ization and on to other lands which were protected by an intensive organization. Obviously in the first two cases the work consists of building outright the roads, fire lines, and telephone lines, to establish a fire protection system. In such places the progress has moved along rapidly and large areas are being put into condition for intensive fire protection. These areas will continue to be enlarged during the life of the C. C. C.

In the latter instances the entire fire protection system is being reconditioned, elaborated, perfected, and extended. In all cases the work has been done in great detail and in such a manner that it can be economically maintained after the basic work is completed.

The importance of the work cannot be over-emphasized. To landowners who were engaged in forestry and fire protection it means the extension of the existing fire protection system to include remote lands which perhaps would not have been brought under protection for years. To landowners who were interested in forestry and fire protection and were maintaining a skeleton
organization in hopes that some day they would be financially able to perfect their system, the C. C. C. has been a great help.

Not only have these two classes of land holdings been developed, but large holdings are now being included in fire protection plans which were formerly not under protection. The owners feel that they can afford to maintain the organization if the work is established and carried through the initial stages.

The establishing of C. C. C. units throughout the South has stimulated forest thought, particularly by the laymen. Heretofore forestry, or the practice of reforestation as it is generally called, was thought of by many as a hobby rather than a business, something to be indulged in when times were good and to be dispensed with when times were bad.

Undoubtedly the greatest good to be derived from the establishment of the C. C. C. cannot be measured by material accomplishments. The taking of 300,000 young, unemployed men from the streets of our cities and giving them healthy, outdoor employment and the opportunity to earn a living for themselves and their dependents is in itself enough to justify the establishment of the work.

Perhaps the greatest true forestry accomplishment is the bringing of the National Forest situation before the people of the nation in such a way that an intimate knowledge of the work and its vital necessity is brought home to them. This, together with the creation of two million forest-minded people, are accomplishments the benefits from which are immense and will not be fully understood for several generations.

\[\text{C.C.C. work: A piling bridge at the entrance to a slash pine plantation.}\]