

CCC Brief History

CCC enrollees throughout the country were credited with renewing the nation's decimated forests by planting an estimated three billion trees from 1933 to 1942. Today, the legacy of the CCC is continued through the effort of thousands of young people who work on the same ground first restored by the men of the CCC.

President Roosevelt wastes no time

The 1932 Presidential election was more a desperate cry for help than it was an election. Accepting the Presidential nomination on July 1, 1932, New York Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt planned to fight against soil erosion and declining timber resources by utilizing unemployed young men from large urban areas.

In what would later be called “The Hundred Days,” President Roosevelt revitalized the faith of the nation by setting motion a “New Deal” for America. One of these New Deal programs was the Emergency Conservation Work (EWC) Act, more commonly known as the Civilian Conservation Corps. With this action, he brought together two wasted resources: young men and land.



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

The strongest reaction to the proposed CCC program came from organized labor. Union leaders feared a loss of jobs that could be filled with union members. Also, they were alarmed at the involvement of the Army and believed this might lead to regimentation of labor.

Emergency Conservation Work legislation passed on March 31, 1933

President Roosevelt promised if granted emergency powers he would have 250,000 men in camps by the end of July, 1933. The speed with which the plan moved through proposal, authorization, implementation and operation was a miracle of cooperation among all branches and agencies of the federal government. It was a mobilization of men, material and transportation on a scale never before known in time of peace. From FDR's inauguration on March 4, 1933, to the induction of the first enrollee on April 7, only 37 days had elapsed.

Senate Bill S. 598 was introduced on March 27, passed both houses of Congress and was on the President's desk to be signed on March 31, 1933

Administration of the CCC unprecedented

The administration of the CCC was unprecedented. Executive Order 6101 dated April 5, 1933, authorized the program, appointed Robert Fechner as director and established an Advisory Council. Representatives of the Secretaries of War, Labor, Agriculture and Interior served on the Council for the duration of the program.

All four agencies performed minor miracles in coordination with the national Director of ECW, Robert Fechner, a union vice-president, personally picked and appointed by FDR. There was no book of rules. There were none. Never before had there been an organization like the CCC. It was an experiment in top level management designed to prevent red tape from strangling the newborn effort. Fechner, and later James J. McEntee, would have their differences with the Council, but unquestionably, each contributed greatly to the success of the CCC.

Logistics was an immediate problem. The bulk of young unemployed youth was concentrated in the East while most of the work projects were in the West. The Army was the only department capable of merging the two and they quickly developed new plans to meet the challenge of managing this peacetime mission. The Army mobilized the nation's transportation system, and moved thousands of enrollees from induction centers to working camps. It used regular and reserve officers, together with regulars of the Coast Guard, Marine Corps and Navy to temporarily command companies.

The Army was not the only organization to evoke extraordinary efforts to meet the demands of this emergency. The Departments of Agriculture and Interior were responsible for planning and organizing work to be performed in every state of the union. The Department of Labor was responsible for the selection and enrollment through state and local relief offices.

The program had great public support

The program had great public support. Young men flocked to enroll. A poll of Republicans supported the program by 67 percent, and 95 percent of Californians approved. Colonel McCormick, publisher of the Chicago Tribune, and an adversary of Roosevelt, gave the CCC his support. Even the socialist Soviet Union praised the program. A Chicago judge thought the CCC was largely responsible for a 55 percent reduction in the crime statistics.

With a firm foundation by April, 1934, the Corps faced the beginning of its second year with near universal approval and praise of the country. This young, inexperienced \$30-a-month labor battalion had met and exceeded all expectations. The impact of mandatory monthly \$25 allotment checks to families boosted the economy across the nation. Allotments were making life a little easier for the people at home. In communities close to the camps, local purchases averaging approximately \$5,000 monthly staved off failure of many small businesses. The man on the radio could, for a change, say, "There's good news tonight."

News from the camps was welcome and good. The enrollees were working hard, eating heartily and gaining weight, while they improved millions of acres of federal, state and some private land. New roads were built, telephone lines strung and the first of millions of trees were planted. Glowing reports of the accomplishments of the Corps were printed in major newspapers, including some that had bitterly opposed other phases of the New Deal. Positive response prompted the President to announce his intention to extend the Corps for at least another year.

In 1935 the CCC began the best years of its life

In 1935, the Civilian Conservation Corps began the best years of its life. The early days of drafty tents, poor fitting uniforms and hazardous operations were gone. Individual congressmen and senators were quick to realize the importance of the camps to their constituencies and political futures. Letters, telegrams, and messages soon flooded the Director's office most of them demanding the building of new camps in their states. Eventually there would be camps in all 48 states and in Hawaii, Alaska, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. By the end of 1935, there were over 2,650 camps operating in all states, California had more than 150. Delaware had three. CCC enrollees were performing more than 100 kinds of work.

Enrollees numbering 505,782 occupied these camps. Other categories, such as officers, supervisors, education advisors and administrators swelled the total to more than 600,000 persons.

Program modifications ensure success

The Emergency Conservation Work Act made no mention of either education or training. They were not officially introduced until 1937 by the Act that formally created a Civilian Conservation Corps. Late in 1933, Clarence S. Marsh was appointed the first Director of Education based on a number of recommendations. By 1934, a formal program had begun. Varying opinions on educational methodology caused controversy and criticism throughout its existence. Even Fechner was never too enthusiastic about the program and suspected that at camp level it might interfere with the work program. This did not materialize and only in the latter years of the CCC was training authorized during normal working hours.

Ultimately, the quality of the educational program was determined by the initiative and qualifications of the Camp Education Advisor (CEA). Also, the attitude and cooperation of the Camp Commanders was important. Both in efficiency and results the education programs varied considerably from camp to camp. However, throughout the Corps, more than 40,000 illiterate young men were taught to read and write. Education was a volunteer activity undertaken during non-working hours. The benefits received from the education program were directly related to the amount of effort whether it be a high school diploma, learning to type, or wood carving.

Although relief of unemployed youth had been the original objective of the ECW, two important modifications became necessary early in 1933. The first extended enlistment coverage to about 14,000 American Indians whose economic conditions were deplorable and had been largely ignored. Before the CCC was terminated, more than 80,000 Native Americans were paid to help reclaim a land that had once been their exclusive domain.

The second modification authorized the enrollment of about 25,000 locally employed men (LEM). Their experience and special skills were vital to train and protect the unskilled enrollees as they transitioned from city dwellers to expert handlers of axes and shovels. Demands of nearby communities that their own unemployed be eligible for hire were also satisfied. Some complaints of "political patronage" emerged, but no serious scandals ever developed.

The appearance of a second Bonus Army in Washington, DC in May, 1933, brought about another unplanned modification when the President issued Executive Order 6129, dated May 11, 1933, authorizing the immediate enrollment of about 25,000 veterans of the Spanish American War and World War I, with no age or marital restrictions. These men were first housed in separate camps and performed duties in conservation suited to their age and physical condition. While not exactly what the veterans had in mind when they marched on Washington, it was an offer that most accepted. A total of nearly 250,000 got a belated opportunity to rebuild lives disrupted by earlier service to their country.

The years 1935-36 witnessed a peak in the size and popularity of the Corps. However, this time period also revealed the first major attempt to change a system which had proven to be workable and successful since early 1933. Before this challenge developed, Congress authorized, funded and extended the existence of the CCC until March, 1935, with a new target of 600,000 enrollees. This action signified the satisfaction of the "grass roots" and their congressional representatives with the work of the CCC.

1935 - Administrative changes influence enrollment

At first, it appeared there would be no problem in reaching the 600,000 man target. However, a new name had appeared among Roosevelt's advisors. Harry Hopkins established new and uncoordinated ground rules for the selection of enrollees. Hopkins' procedures were based on relief rolls and effectively ruined the quota system in use by all the states. Fechner protested violently, and the developing hassle slowed down recruiting efforts and created much confusion. By September, 1935, there were only about 500,000 men located in 2,600 camps. Never again, during the remainder of the life of the Corps would those numbers be reached.

While Fechner was still struggling with the changes required by the failure to meet the 600,000 strength figure, he was struck by another change in strategy that spelled disaster. Roosevelt quietly informed him to expect a drastic reduction in the number of camps and enrollees in an effort to balance the federal budget in an election year. Roosevelt, a master politician, was aware that a major cut in government spending would be an important selling

point in this campaign for re-election. However, in 1936 there were other factors that Roosevelt either ignored or had underestimated. Election year or not, Roosevelt's proposed budget reform invited trouble.

As soon as the proposed reduction was announced the flood gates burst, and Congress was besieged with protests. The Corps was at the height of its popularity. No one wanted camps closed. Republicans and Democrats alike frantically sought a reversal of Roosevelt's policy. The President was adamant and insisted that the plan would begin in January, 1936. By June, he wanted approximately 300,000 men in about 1,400 camps. Coincidentally a few camps previously scheduled to close did so about this time. This action brought another deluge of mail. House Democrats sparked an open revolt and Congress was determined to take joint action to maintain the Corps at its current strength. Roosevelt and his advisors finally recognized the threat to their own legislative program and wisely called a retreat. He advised Fechner that the proposal had been dropped and that all existing camps and personnel would remain. Roosevelt's own political party had refused to let him economize in an election year at the expense of the Civilian Conservation Corps.

Despite a few problems, the year 1936 was a success for the CCC. The projects reached high levels and were faithfully recorded and reported. This proud record increased each year and by 1942 all states could boast of permanent projects attributed to the CCC.

Corps Accomplishments

Some of the specific accomplishments of the Corps included 3,470 fire towers erected, 97,000 miles of fire roads built, 4,235,000 man-days devoted to fighting fires, and more than three billion trees planted. Five hundred camps were under the direction of the Soil Conservation Service, performing erosion control. Erosion was ultimately arrested on more than twenty million acres. The CCC made outstanding contributions in the development of recreational facilities in national, state, county and metropolitan parks.

There were 7,153,000 enrollee man-days expended on other related conservation activities. These included protection of range for the Grazing Service, protecting the natural habitats of wildlife, stream improvement, restocking of fish and building small dams for water conservation. Eighty-three camps in 15 western states were assigned 45 projects of this nature.

Drainage was another important phase of land conservation and management. There were 84,400,000 acres of good agriculture land dependent on man-made drainage systems. This is an area equal to the combined states of Ohio, Indiana and Iowa. Forty-six camps were assigned to this work under the direction of the U.S. Bureau of Agriculture Engineering. Native American enrollees did much to this work.

Residents of southern Indiana will never forget the emergency work of the CCC during the flooding of the Ohio River in 1937. The combined strength of camps in the area saved countless lives and much property in danger of being swept away. They contributed 1,240,000 man-days of emergency work in floods of the Ohio and Mississippi valleys. Other disasters in which the CCC participated were the floods of Vermont and New York in 1937 and the New England hurricane of 1938. In Utah from 1936-37, 1,000,000 sheep were stranded in blizzards and were in danger of starvation. CCC enrollees braved the drifts and saved the flocks.

The greatest tragedy to members of the Civilian Conservation Corps occurred during the Labor Day hurricane of 1935, one of the most violent storms on record. Three CCC camps on the Florida Keys had a complement of 684 veterans. Less than one-third were on holiday leave when winds of 150 to 200 miles per hour struck the area, knocking out connecting bridges and rail lines. A rescue train sent from Miami was derailed before reaching its destination. The official report listed 44 identified dead, 238 missing or unidentified dead, and 106 injured. Many were literally sandblasted to death, with clothing and skin heavily scraped from their bodies.

Few records were kept of the sociological impact of the 1930s on the nation's young men. Many had never been beyond the borders of their state, and others had never left home. Yet, many would never return. They would choose to remain in towns and villages near their camps. They married, reared families and put down new roots,

such as others had done during other migratory movements in America. Those who did return, many with brides, came back as successful products of an experiment in living that had renewed and restored self confidence in themselves and in their country.

The Civilian Conservation Corps approached maturity in 1937. Hundreds of enrollees had passed through the system and returned home to boast of their experiences. Hundreds more demonstrated their satisfaction by extending their enlistments. Life in the camps had settled down to a routine of working everyday except Sunday. After the evening meal, camps came to life as men relaxed and had fun. One building in every camp was a combined dayroom, recreation center and canteen, or PX. In this building, many friendships were fostered amongst the noise of ping-pong, poker, innumerable bottles of “coke”, and occasional beers, many lasting friendships were fostered.

Congress never establishes Corps as a Permanent Agency

There were many valid reasons why Congress chose not to establish the Corps as a permanent agency. However, disenchantment and failure to recognize the success of the organization was never a topic of debate. To the contrary, in a vote of confidence, Congress extended its life as an independently funded agency for an additional two years. Speculation suggests, Congress still regarded the CCC as a temporary relief organization with an uncertain future, rather than as a bold, progressive solution to the continuing problem of our vanishing national resources.

Since Fechner’s appointment during the hectic days of 1933, he had been able to control the operation of the CCC with relatively minor challenges to his authority. However, 1939 would bring about a major challenge at the time when he was struggling with internal problems brought about by changing conditions both in the United States and Europe. The European military controversy and its pending negative affect on England and France had already begun to impact the U.S. economy. In the effort to provide them with supplies to combat invasion, jobs were created and applications for the CCC declined. Again, it was a sudden change in administration policy that generated the most heat for Fechner and the Civilian Conservation Corps.

One of Roosevelt’s long range plans was the reorganization of the administrative functions of some federal agencies. Congress had been reluctant to approve such a move until early in 1939. They finally authorized a modified proposal after much debate. The Federal Security Agency (FSA) was created to consolidate several offices, services and boards under one Director. The CCC lost its status as an independent organization and was brought into the new organization. Fechner was furious when he learned the Director of FSA would have authority over him. Appeals to the President were futile as FDR believed the consolidation was important. In an angry protest, Fechner submitted his resignation, but later withdrew it. Some felt that withdrawing his resignation was a mistake for it was common knowledge that Fechner was in poor health. Early in December, he had a massive heart attack and died a few weeks later on New Year’s Eve.

Fechner was the CCC. His honest, day by day attention to all facets of the program sustained high levels of accomplishment and shaped an impressive public image of the CCC. He was a common man, neither impressed nor intimidated by his contemporaries in Washington. Fechner was considered deficient and lacking vision in some areas but his dedication was second to none. His lengthy and detailed progress reports to FDR were valuable information. He was a good and faithful servant who was spared from witnessing the end of the CCC program.

1940 - CCC begins a year that signals change

In 1940 the Civilian Conservation Corps began a year of change. The death of Fechner was a severe blow and the emerging war in Europe was the greatest concern to Roosevelt and Congress. John J. McEntee was appointed by the Congress to be Director. He was as knowledgeable as Fechner as he had been the assistant since the beginning. McEntee was an entirely different personality without the appeasing talents of his predecessor, and none of his patience. Harold Ickes, another short-tempered individual, strongly opposed his appointment. This increased the friction between the Department of Interior and Director’s office and was typical of the problems McEntee inherited. He served in a different, uncertain atmosphere and received little praise for his efforts.

The Corps itself continued to be popular. Another election year attempt by the President to reduce its strength precipitated a reaction reminiscent of the congressional revolt of 1936. Despite a well-meaning attempt at economy, Congress, with an eye to the folks back home, added \$50 million to the CCC's 1940-41 appropriation. Also, the Corps remained at the current strength of about 300,000 enrollees, Congress would never again be as generous. Other problems were developing within the Congress related to the defense of the country. Inevitably, the priority and prestige of the CCC suffered with each crisis. Those congressmen who had opposed FDR's "New Deal" gained strength some calling for termination of the Corps.

By late summer, 1941, it was obvious the Corps was in serious trouble. Lack of applicants, desertion and the number of enrollees leaving for jobs had reduced the Corps to fewer than 200,000 men in about 900 camps. There were also disturbing signs that public opinion was slowly changing. Major newspapers that had long defended and supported the Corps, were now questioning the necessity of retaining the CCC when unemployment had practically disappeared. Most agreed there was still work to be done, but they insisted defense came first.

The bombing of Pearl Harbor had shaken the country to its very core. It soon became obvious that, in a nation dedicated to war, any federal project not directly associated with the war effort was not a priority. The joint committee of Congress authorized by the 1941-42 appropriations bill was investigating all federal agencies to determine which ones, if any, were essential to the war effort. The CCC was no exception and came under review late in 1941. It was not a surprise that the committee recommended the Civilian Conservation Corps be abolished by July 1, 1942.

The CCC lived on for a few more months, but the end was inevitable. Technically, the Corps was never abolished. In June 1942 by a narrow vote of 158 to 151, the House of Representatives curtailed funding. The Senate reached a tie vote twice. Finally, Vice-President Harry Wallace broke the tie voting to fund the CCC. It was a valiant effort, but it didn't work. The Senate-House committee compromise finished it with the Senate concurring in return for a House action authorizing \$8 million to liquidate the agency. The full Senate confirmed the action by voice vote and the Civilian Conservation Corps moved into the pages of history.

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The Continuing Legacy of the CCC - The Modern Corps Movement

Roots of the Conservation Corps Concept

In 1850, the Scottish essayist Thomas Carlyle wrote that unemployed men should be organized into regiments to drain bogs and work in wilderness areas for the betterment of society. In 1910, Harvard philosopher, William James published an essay: "The Moral Equivalent of War" where he proposed conscription of youth "enlisted against nature".

In 1915, conservationist George H. Maxwell proposed that young men be enrolled into a national conservation corps. Their duties would include forest and plains conservation work, to fight forest fires, flood control, and the reclamation of swamp and desert lands.

In 1928, Franklin Roosevelt was elected Governor of New York and in 1930 the New York legislature passed a law to purchase abandoned or sub-marginal farmlands for reforestation. In 1931, the state government set up a temporary emergency relief administration. The unemployed were hired to work in reforestation projects, clearing underbrush, fighting fires, controlling insects, constructing roads and trails, and developing recreation facilities.

At the same time New York State was developing their conservation and reforestation program, other states including California, Washington, Virginia, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Michigan and Indiana, were hiring or planning for the unemployed to do conservation work. The states of California and Washington, in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service developed work camps for the unemployed. By 1932, California had established 25 camps of 200 men each.

By 1932, the governments of Bulgaria, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Austria and Germany had developed youth corps.

The need for a national conservation corps became evident in the early 1930's. In 1931, about 2 million people were "on the road" including an estimated 250,000 teenagers. Approximately 54% of young men between the ages of 17 and 25 were either out of work or working unsteadily in meager jobs. By 1933, an estimated 12-15 million people were out of work. Farms were being abandoned, more than 100,000 businesses went bankrupt and more than 2,000 banks had shut their doors. From an environmental perspective, only 100 million acres of an original 800 million acres of virgin forests were left and 6 billion tons of top soil were lost to wind and erosion each year.

The Post War Years

In the years following the end of World War II and the Korean Conflict, several attempts were made by conservation groups to re-establish the program.

In 1957, the National Park Service placed summer volunteers in the Grand Teton and Olympic National Parks in a new program called the Student Conservation Program (SCP). The concept of engaging young people as park volunteers was suggested by Elizabeth Cushman in her 1955 senior thesis, "A Proposed Student Conservation Corps". Her idea, similar in many ways to the Civilian Conservation Corps of the 1930's, was to take the burden of labor-intensive jobs such as entrance fee collecting or trail work from National Park Service employees and shift those tasks to the student program.

1964 saw the Student Conservation Program transition from the National Park Service to a new organization known as the Student Conservation Association, Inc. (SCA). Conrad Wirth, former NPS Director, would become the new association's chair and Elizabeth Cushman Titus would be named as SCA's president.

A Youth Conservation Corps was proposed by Senator Hubert Humphrey of Minnesota in 1959 in an attempt to save trees, land, and youth. This bill passed the Senate by a vote of 47-45, but due to opposition by the Eisenhower Administration, the House refused to consider it.

While running for office in 1960, John Kennedy proposed a corps of 100,000 youth between ages 18 and 25 to work to preserve forests, stock lakes and rivers, clear streams, and protect America's abundance of natural resources. In 1963 the President's Committee on Youth Employment pointed out that over a half million young people between ages 16 and 21 were out of school and out of work, and that number could very well double by 1970. Several attempts to establish a youth conservation corps during the Kennedy Administration failed.

Once again, Congress failed to act on a federal youth conservation corps program that offered no formal training and thought that a simple work relief program like the CCC did not meet the needs of the 1960's.

Rebirth of Conservation Corps Programs

It was in 1965 that a youth conservation corps program would finally develop. One of the major concerns of President Johnson's war on poverty was how to help the rising number of teenage drop-outs and draft rejectees break the "cycle of poverty." Sargent Shriver, the President's General in the War on Poverty, incorporated a youth conservation element into a new training program to be known as the "Job Corps."

Through this effort, the Job Corps Civilian Conservation Centers (JCCCC), like the CCC camps of the 1930's were administered by Federal land managing agencies like the National Park Service and the U.S. Forest Service. These conservation centers would be just one of several types of Job Corps Centers that also included male or female urban centers.

At first, the Job Corps specifically designed the conservation centers for enrollees with less than a 5th grade reading level. Enrollees stayed at conservation centers until their reading level improved and then were transferred to urban

centers for vocational training. Critics claimed the conservation centers were disguised “labor camps” since they managed the least educated youth and more than half the enrollee’s time was spent on conservation work. As a result of this criticism, the policy of separating youth by educational level was which gave the conservation centers equal status with other types of Job Corps centers. Conservation centers still differed from other centers in size with only 160-220 students versus up to 2,000 students in the larger urban centers. Also, training at the conservation centers had a tendency to parallel the types of conservation work needed near the centers. While the primary focus of Job Corps is to provide young adults with vocational training, many of the training projects conducted by the Job Corps Civilian Conservation Centers help meet the conservation and community service objectives of nearby local and federal agencies. The U.S. Forest Service operates 28 Civilian Conservation Centers nation-wide.

In 1964, Lloyd Meeds, a candidate for Congress, from the state of Washington used the creation of a Federal Youth Conservation Corps as a campaign issue. Congressman Meeds and Senator Henry Jackson had been impressed with the state of Washington’s own Youth Development and Conservation Corps which had begun in 1960. It was the effort of these two legislators that began the process that would result in the passage of a Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) bill.

Legislative aides working with staff from the U.S. Forest Service and the Department of Interior worked together to create the YCC. Senator Jackson introduced W.1076 in the Senate on February 18, 1969 and stressed the educational impacts of his proposal. Young people, he said, “would acquire an appreciation for our natural resources which cannot be taught in schools. In addition, they would develop good work habits and attitudes which would persist for the remainder of their lives.”

Despite opposition from the Nixon Administration, the Youth Conservation Corps began as a small pilot program in the summer of 1971. After three summers of operation as a pilot program, and with strong Congressional support, the YCC became a permanent institution in 1974. Program participation jumped from 3,510 in 1973, to 9,813 youth in 1974, and continued to grow until it peaked at 46,000 enrollees in 1978. In the first ten years of operation, the Youth Conservation Corps provided an opportunity for over 213,300 young people to “earn while they learn.” Between the years of 1974 and 1980, the YCC flourished and youth could be found nationwide each summer accomplishing needed conservation projects while gaining valuable insights into their environment. In addition to being operated on National Forest Service and Department of Interior lands, YCC programs were conducted throughout fifty states, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, the trust territory of the Pacific Islands, and American Samoa. In 1980 the YCC was dealt an almost fatal blow when funding was halted by the Reagan Administration. Both the Departments of Interior and Agriculture felt so strongly about the Youth Conservation Corps that they have continued the program on a much reduced level with funds coming directly from each agency’s existing budget.

Late in the 1970s, an even larger federal program was launched, the Young Adult Conservation Corps (YACC), which provided young people with year-round conservation-related employment and education opportunities. With an annual appropriation of \$260 million and employing approximately 25,000 individuals, the YACC operated at both the federal and state levels. Like the Civilian Conservation Corps of the 1930s, the Young Adult Conservation Corps provided federal, tribal and state agencies the opportunity to complete valuable conservation and community service projects while providing opportunities for young Americans. As a result of the 1980 federal elections, funding for the YACC ended but the program would provide a working model that many future state and local conservation corps would utilize.

State, Local and Urban Conservation Corps

The value of Youth Conservation Corps and the Young Adult Conservation Corps had been proven and many states had already begun to support these programs directly. California became the first when former-Governor Jerry Brown launched the California Conservation Corps (CCC) in 1976. By the end of the decade, conservation corps

were operating in Iowa and Ohio, and during the first half of the 1980s in several other states, including Maryland, Minnesota, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Vermont, Washington and Wisconsin.

In 1983, the emerging Youth Corps movement took a new twist with the birth of the first urban conservation corps programs. Once again, California took the lead with the start-up of urban conservation corps in Marin County, San Francisco and Oakland (East Bay), plus eight more in subsequent years. The California local corps were strengthened by passage of the California Bottle Act in 1985, which earmarked funding for local corps' recycling projects.

Just a year later, New York City established the City Volunteer Corps (CVC) and added a new dimension to the corps field by engaging young people in the delivery of human services as well as conservation work. During the mid-1980s, new state and local corps continued to spring up across the country despite the absence of federal support. Many of the early local conservation corps began to add human services projects to their portfolios.

Late in the 1980s, with support from several large foundations (Ford, Kellogg, Hewlett, Mott, Rockefeller, and the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund, among others), The Corps Network (formerly known as NASCC) and Public/Private Ventures (P/PV) sponsored a national demonstration to create and evaluate urban corps in 10 cities across the country. The best practices gleaned from the established corps programs and the first of these new corps became operational in the fall of 1990.

In 1992, the youth corps movement saw the first targeted federal funding in more than a decade, when the Commission on National and Community Service awarded approximately \$22.5 million in grants to 23 states, the District of Columbia, the Los Angeles Conservation Corps (LACC) (for disaster relief projects) and five Indian tribes. These funds became available under the American Conservation and Youth Service Corps Act or Subtitle C of the National and Community Service Act of 1990. While only half of the established corps benefited directly from these funds, the number of corps programs almost doubled to just over 100 as a result of the new Federal "seed" money.

In 1993, the Congress enacted and President Clinton signed The National and Community Service Trust Act, which amended Subtitle C of the 1990 legislation to provide federal support to many kinds of community service programs in addition to the traditional youth corps. Within this new legislation would be authorized a new program, the AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC), a team based residential program for young men and women age 16-24. NCCC members serve in teams of ten to twelve and are assigned to projects throughout the nation addressing critical needs in education, public safety and the environment. The new law also established post-service educational benefits for participants through the AmeriCorps Program. During the first full year of AmeriCorps, beginning in September 1994, 53 youth corps received AmeriCorps grants through state-wide population-based and competitive processes as well as through a national direct application process and collaborations with Federal agencies.

In recent years, there has been an increase in funding along with a corresponding growth of the conservation corps community. However, much more is needed to address today's youth employment, social and environmental issues.

Many of today's corps have benefited from the support of Civilian Conservation Corps veterans. Over the past 40 years CCC alumni have assisted with developing new corps programs, providing program guidance as Board members. Furthermore, they are strong advocates for youth and the environment.

Today, members of CCC Legacy, young and old, continue to support the idea that corps programs efficiently develop this nation's most precious human and natural resources.