

CAMP MERCER CCC IS ACTIVE

Many Projects Carried on by Enrollees of Camp Near Manitowish.

Enrollees of the Ironwood State Camp, Mercer, are carrying on the active work of the Civilian Conservation Corps, proper supervision of the camp.

Camp Mercer was established on June 20, 1933. It is ideally located approximately three miles east of Manitowish, Wisconsin on Highway 51 and on the banks of the beautiful Manitowish River. The work area consists of approximately 500 acres. The soil of the camp work area is classified as sandy loam, which is ideal for the raising of timber of the zone bearing species, namely, White, Norway and Jack pine.

The work projects, which have been undertaken since the inception of the Camp, have proved to be of immense value and should benefit this section for years to come. The following paragraphs will attempt to briefly describe the main work projects of this camp.

Combat Forest Fires

Fire suppression is of first importance in this camp. Towers, adequate telephone lines, and truck trails have been constructed for the purpose of detecting, controlling and preventing the forest's greatest enemy. The towers, which are trained to a point of perfection in this struggle to save our rapidly disappearing timber. The fire towers are manned by capable tower-men selected from this camp, who watch an outlined territory for the slightest vestige of smoke. When they detect smoke, they immediately telephone the nearest ranger station. The ranger station forwards orders to the nearest CCC camp and the camp fire fighters are sent on the scene. This system checks the fire before they have done much damage.

Tree Planting

Tree planting has been carried on on a large scale. Altogether 238,712 trees have been planted on the reforestation and field planting projects. Each project is replanted every year to offset the loss of the young trees, which have died from the elements. White, Norway and Jack pines are being planted. The planting season is quite short and is dependent largely upon a wet season, which usually occurs in the spring and fall. Approximately 50 men are engaged on this project at that time.

Clean Out Hazards

Fire hazard reduction, which consists of cleaning out and the burning of old dead trees and brush, has done much to eliminate fire hazards. If this work would be left, it would constitute very dangerous fire hazards. This project also has done much to beautify the surrounding country.

Lake Improvement

Lake improvement is doing much to save our fish life. The brush refuges, which are planted in the lake, serve as a means of protection and provides an ideal feeding place for the small fish. The brush refuges and spawning boxes are made in the fall, after the lakes are frozen over, holes are cut in various places for the purpose of assisting game release. This project also serves as a means of cleaning up the lake shore of dead and snags, which are used in the building of the refuges.

Roadside Clean-up

The roadside clean-up work, which consists of the burning of windfalls, dead trees and underbrush, reduces fire hazards. This also beautifies the roadside and prepares it for planting.

Fuel Supply

The fuel supply for the camp is obtained from the brush trails, made side clean-up, and fire hazard reduction projects. The second body of wood is brought to camp and cut into the desired size, while the old stocker wood is burned on the spot.

Protect Pine Trees

The blight rust eradicator has done much to check the blight rust fungus, which destroys our white pine. The blight rust fungus is dependent upon gooseberry and wild currant bushes for the completion of its life cycle. The destruction of all gooseberry and wild currant bushes within nine hundred feet of all white pine stands keeps a crew of 25 men busy throughout the gooseberry growing season. This crew is covering the entire camp work area.

Bird House Project

The camp has taken an active part in the feeding of wild life during the winter, when the animals are unable to find food by themselves. Alfalfa and clover hay is placed in barns over feeding grounds. This hay is cut and baled by one of the crews from camp in the fall.

Bird House Project

A bird house project has been started recently to encourage birds, who are the natural enemies of forest insects.

Supervision

All projects are supervised by competent and trustworthy foremen, who are in turn instructed by the camp superintendent.

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