

Rabideau Civilian Conservation Corps Camp
County Road 39
Blackduck Vicinity
Beltrami County
Minnesota

HABS No. MN-147

HABS
MINN
4-BLADU.V,
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Denver, Colorado 80225-0287

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
RABIDEAU CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS CAMP

HABS
MINN
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1-

HABS No. MN-147

Location: One-half mile west of Beltrami County Highway 39, six miles south of Blackduck, Beltrami County, Minnesota.

Quad: Blackduck, Minnesota, 7.5 Minute Series, 1972.

UTM: 15.383400.5277480
15.383860.5277480
15.383860.5277110
15.383400.5277120

Present Owner: United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service, Chippewa National Forest Service.

Present Use: The Rabideau Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Camp is an uninhabited complex of buildings in the Chippewa National Forest. The public may visit the camp and guided tours are provided by CCC alumni during the summer months. An annual CCC reunion is also held at the camp.

Significance: Established in 1935, the Rabideau Civilian Conservation Corps Camp is historically significant for its association with the social, political, and economic impact of the Great Depression and the unprecedented federal response which led to the establishment of the CCC, generally considered the New Deal's most popular and successful relief program. The camp is also important for its role in the expansion and development of the Chippewa National Forest during the Depression Era. In addition, the camp is architecturally significant as the most intact CCC camp in the United States. The complex of buildings surviving at the site is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Historian: Rolf T. Anderson, 1994

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History and Historical Context:

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 there many young people unemployed, but approximately 30% of those working had only part-time jobs.¹ Roosevelt suggested a prompt plan to enroll unemployed persons in public employment.

Congress quickly responded to Roosevelt's proposal, approving on March 31, 1933, Executive Order 6106, Relief of Unemployment through the Performance of Useful Public Works. One of the components of the legislation established Emergency Conservation Work, which was immediately referred to as the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), although not officially designated as such until 1937.

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 were to be responsible for the actual work projects, technical planning and execution, and the supervision of the work force.²

Enrollees had to be unemployed single men between the ages of 18 and 25. United States citizenship was required as well as sound physical fitness, and each person selected had to demonstrate need. A limited number of skilled local men, known as "locally experienced men" or LEMs, could be hired as well. For these men, the age and marital stipulations were waived. The bulk of the work force, however, was to be taken from the unemployed in 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

¹ John C. Paige, The Civilian Conservation Corps and the National Park Service: A Administrative History (N.p.: United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1985), 5.

² T. Otis Alison, William D. Honey, Thomas C. Hogg, and Kimberly K. Lakin, The Forest Service and the Civilian Conservation Corps: 1933-42 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1986), 77-81.

per month, although it was required that \$25 be returned to their families.³

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 each camp typically containing 200 men.⁴ In Minnesota, CCC enrollees were sent to the state-wide headquarters at Fort Snelling, later known as the Head Quarters Company, Minnesota District, which was in fact the 7th Army Corps. Here they received clothing and supplies and were sent on to the camps. By August 1933, there were 12,200 men employed in 61 camps throughout Minnesota.

In the spring of 1935, the residents of Blackduck, Minnesota learned from the local newspaper that their sparsely populated north woods region would soon be the recipient of New Deal largesse: "Two additional CCC camps will be established about June 15th One of these camps will have its post office at Blackduck and the other Bagley."⁵ The Blackduck camp was to be located about six miles south of the small Minnesota town in Beltrami County, occupying a picturesque site between Lake Carls and Lake Benjamin, amid a stand of birch trees. Lake Rabideau (also spelled "Rebedew" by locals) was a short distance to the east, and it gave the new camp its name (see Figure 1). Construction of the Rabideau Camp was begun with civilian labor and the camp was nearly complete when its first occupants arrived. This group was Company 3749, formed at Bennett Springs State Park near Lebanon, Missouri in July 1935, under the direction of Lieutenant Jefferson T. Meyers, United States Army. The new CCC Company had needed over a month to organize, with the majority of its enrollees coming from southern Missouri. In mid-August 1935, they departed Lebanon for a one-and-one-half day train ride to Blackduck. By late September the camp was ready for occupancy and the CCC Company organized a dance to celebrate. Forestry projects, 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 little more than four months at the Rabideau Camp.⁶

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 46 miles

³ Paige, 15.

⁴ Conrad L. Wirth, Parks, Politics, and the People (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 107.

⁵ Blackduck American, 1 May 1935.

⁶ S.R.L. Williams, "Memories of CCC #3749 - 1935," January 1986, located at the U.S. Forest Service, Chippewa National Forest, Forest Supervisor's Office, Cass Lake, Minnesota.

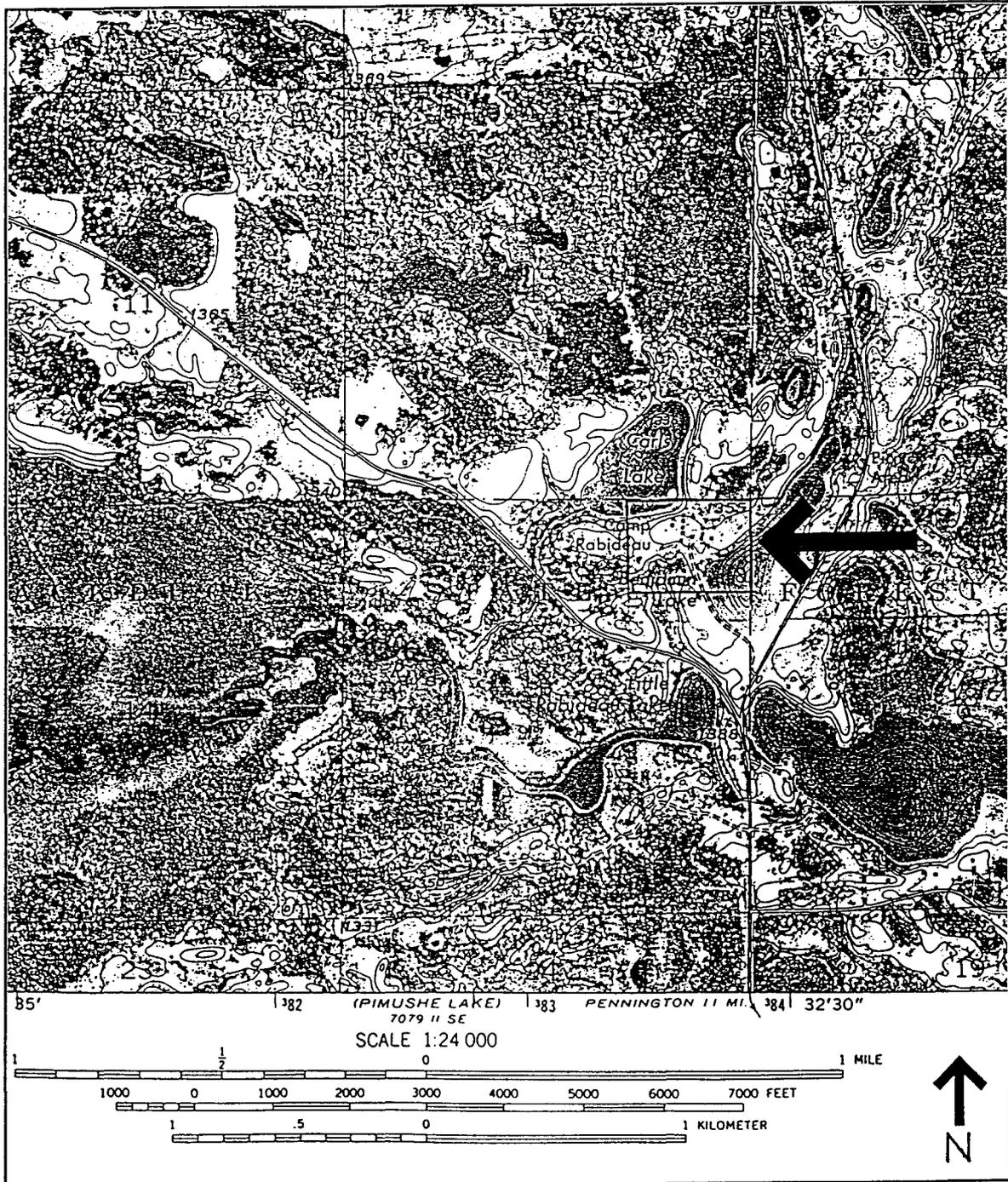


Figure 1: Map of Rabideau Civilian Conservation Corps Camp and vicinity.
Source: USGS, "Blackduck, Minnesota," 7.5 Minute Series, 1972.

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, the Army personnel and 188 CCC enrollees left for Bena, Minnesota and from there were transported by truck to a location 12 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, which 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, who had been hired to provide skilled labor and supervision. The company began to construct the camp in July and by early October 16 buildings had been completed, all featuring palisade log construction.⁷ 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. . . ."⁸

After about two and one-half years at the site, it was announced that the company would be moving to the recently vacated Rabideau Camp. The 46-mile move took place on January 5, 1936, accompanied by temperatures reportedly between 30 and 45 degrees below zero. But in spite of the weather, the camp's Educational Advisor, Clair T. Rollings, noted that "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." 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 original layout with the principal common-use buildings, including a Mess Hall (Building No. 20, razed), Bath House and Laundry (Building No. 21, razed), and Hospital (Building No. 17, HABS No. MN-147-O), centrally located on a north-south axis (see Figure 2). Four barracks stood to both the east and west of the core buildings. A Recreation Hall (Building No.

⁷ Log construction was 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), which 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 Alvwood, which was in close proximity to the Rabideau Camp.

⁸ C.N. Alleger, Civilian Conservation Corps, Minnesota District (Rapid City, SD: Johnston and Bordewyk, ca. 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."

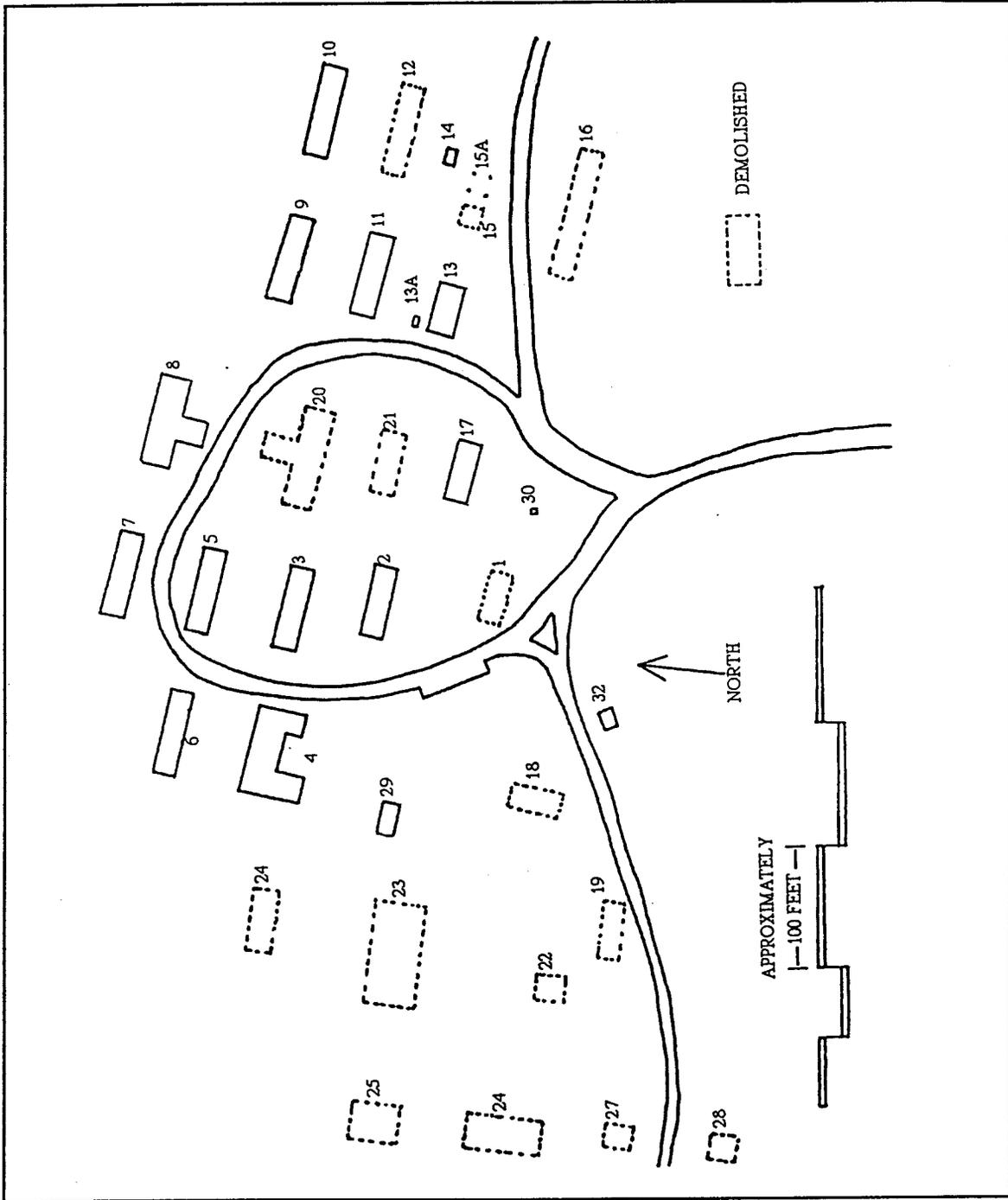


Figure 2: Rabideau Civilian Conservation Corps Camp site plan, 1994. Adapted from plan in Preservation Alliance of Minnesota files. See accompanying key for building identification.

KEY TO RABIDEAU CAMP SITE PLAN (FIGURE 2)

Building No. Identification

1. Forest Service Office (razed)
2. Forest Service Officer's Quarters (HABS No. MN-147-A)
3. Barracks (HABS No. MN-147-B)
4. Education Building (HABS No. MN-147-C)
5. Barracks (HABS No. MN-147-D)
6. Barracks (HABS No. MN-147-E)
7. Recreation Hall (HABS No. MN-147-F)
8. Mess Hall (HABS No. MN-147-G)
9. Barracks (HABS No. MN-147-H)
10. Barracks (HABS No. MN-147-I)
11. Barracks (HABS No. MN-147-J)
12. Barracks (razed)
13. Army Officer's Quarters (HABS No. MN-147-L)
- 13A. Fire Tool Equipment Shed (HABS No. MN-147-K)
14. Wash House (HABS No. MN-147-M)
15. Pump House (razed)
- 15A. Water Tower (HABS No. MN-147-N)
16. Army Office and Supply Room (razed)
17. Hospital (HABS No. MN-147-O)
18. Storage Garage (razed)
19. Tool House (HABS No. MN-147-S)
20. Mess Hall (Original, razed)
21. Bath House and Laundry (razed)
22. Oil House (HABS No. MN-147-R)
23. Storage Garage (razed)
24. Storage Garage (razed)
25. Repair Shop (razed)
26. Equipment Shed (razed)
27. Blacksmith Shop (razed)
28. Coal House (razed)
29. Picnic Shelter (HABS No. MN-147-Q)
30. Flagpole (HABS No. MN-147-P)

7, HABS No. MN-147-F) was positioned at the northern edge of the camp overlooking Lake Carls, while the service yard was located to the southwest and included two garages for the Army and Forest Service (Building Nos. 23 and 24, razed), an Oil House (Building No. 22, HABS No. MN-147-R), and a gas pump. The Army Office and Supply Room (Building No. 16, razed) was near Lake Benjamin to the southeast and included space for both the Army and Forest Service, as well as a central supply room for the camp. Additional buildings and structures included separate living quarters for Army and Forest Service personnel (Army Officer's Quarters, Building No. 13, HABS No. MN-147-L and Forest Service Officer's Quarters, Building No. 2, HABS No. MN-147-A), a Pump House (Building No. 15, razed), a Water Tower (Building No. 15A, HABS No. MN-147-N), and a Flagpole (HABS No. MN-147-30). The camp's road system formed a loop with convenient access to the majority of the buildings. In design and materials, the camp was extremely utilitarian, relying on simple, one-story, wood-frame, gable-roofed forms with shiplap siding.

Enrollees arriving at the Rabideau Camp were given a physical examination and small pox vaccination at the camp's Hospital (Building No. 17, HABS No. MN-147-O). 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, which were changed once a week. The camp day began at 6:00 a.m. After breakfast was served in the Mess Hall (Building No. 20, razed), 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. The groups 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 had been 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 and were over by 9:00. Lights out was at 10:00, which left one hour for reading in the camp library or working on a project in the camp workshop. Saturday was spent washing clothes, cleaning the barracks, and engaging in 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.⁹ The oldest surviving report,

⁹ Box 110, Records of the Civilian Conservation Corps, Record Group 35, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

dated July 8, 1936, was completed just six months after Company 708 occupied the camp. It noted that there were 148 men in the company. Of these, 102 men were assigned to Forest Service projects, 12 were local men who were providing skilled labor or some type of supervision, 21 were assigned to work at the camp itself, 2 were sick, 6 were absent without leave, and 5 were absent with leave.

One of the report's most extensive sections was the "Monthly Camp Educational Report," prepared by the camp's Education Director, Clair T. Rollings. According to the June 1936 report, 93% of the camp's enrollees had finished the 8th grade and 18% had finished high school. The CCC made certain that enrollees had ample opportunity to further their education. An astonishing number of classes were taught at the Rabideau camp, with instruction provided by Rollings, other camp personnel, and even enrollees. Offerings included Business Arithmetic, Business English, Composition, Penmanship, and Spelling, all considered elementary level; Journalism, Sociology, Typing I, and Typing II, all considered high school level; 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. In addition, thirteen correspondence courses were available from the University of North Dakota, although 12 of these were apparently considered high school level. Approximately 80% of the enrollees participated in the camp's educational program during leisure hours. The camp's 500-book library offered still other opportunities for "improvement."

Work projects of the Rabideau Camp involved nearly all aspects of forest management, including tree planting, timber stand improvement, fire fighting, surveying, logging, trail building, bridge construction, and stream erosion control, as well as developing swimming beaches and other recreational areas. Other projects included stocking Twin, Lost, and Moose lakes, all south of Blackduck, with a shipment of 22 cans of sunfish and crappie fingerlings, filling a sink hold on the Blackduck-Cass Lake Road, and collecting 50 bushels of white pine cones from which the seeds were to be extracted. A log bridge was constructed across Turtle River at the Sugar Bush School House, 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, which had been introduced on the State Game Refuge near Waskish as one of the wildlife projects of the Beltrami Island Project.¹⁰

¹⁰ The 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

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 remote spots which had proven a serious fire hazard in the past. 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.¹¹ Camp enrollees took part in constructing the Blackduck Ranger Station, fire towers at Blackduck and Pimushe, and a dam on the outlet to Rabideau Lake. It is also believed they assisted in the construction of the Forest Supervisor's Office in Cass Lake.

While many of the conservation efforts of the CCC eventually faded from the landscape, today's visitors to the Rabideau Camp may experience one of the New Deal'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 Lake Carls. Four-year-old white spruce seedlings from the forest's Cass Lake Nursery were planted, with each enrollee setting about 200 per day. Some time later, 83 days were spent removing aspen and brush from the stand. The plantation was thinned in 1984-86 and will be 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 are still visible.

Rabideau Camp continued to expand after the arrival of Company 708. One early change appears to have been the addition of two wings to the Education Building (Building No. 4, HABS No. MN-147-C). Later, a barracks (eventually rebuilt as a Mess Hall, Building No. 8, HABS No. MN-147-G) was built to the north of the Mess Hall (Building 20, razed), probably so that the camp could accommodate a full complement of 200 men. While the earliest "Camp Inspection Report" listed the company strength at 148 men, reports from 1938, 1939, and 1940 indicated there were consistently just under 200 men at the camp. The most significant changes may have occurred 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 (Building No. 1, razed). 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 (Building No. 2, HABS No. MN-147-A). The service yard was also expanded with the addition of a 50' x 20' Tool House (Building No. 19, HABS No. MN-147-S) and a 60' x 20' Equipment

Ludlow Island, one of the project's side camps, and were fed moss or lichen five times a day, which was essential to their well-being. For additional information about the Beltrami Island Project, refer to the National Register Nomination for the "Norris Camp."

¹¹ These projects were described in articles in the Blackduck American dated 12 August 1936, 14 October 1936, 7 July 1937, 16 February 1938, 29 June 1938, 25 October 1939, 6 December 1939, and 14 December 1939.

Storage Shed (Building No. 26, razed). The Blacksmith Shop (Building No. 27, razed) was also enlarged. A beautification project was also undertaken, apparently by the enrollees during off hours:

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.¹²

Additional work occurred in 1939 when the interiors of the Hospital (Building No. 17, HABS No. MN-147-O), Forest Service Officer's Quarters (Building No. 2, HABS No. MN-147-A), Mess Hall (Building No. 20, razed), Bath House and Laundry (Building No. 21, razed), Army Office and Supply Building (Building No. 16, razed), and the library in the Education Building (Building No. 4, HABS No. MN-147-C) were remodeled. In 1940, the Forest Service Office (Building No. 1, razed) was expanded with an extension to the east to allow for additional space. The counters, filing cabinets, desks, chairs, and even waste baskets were all made in the camp's workshop. As a reporter for the local press noted:

Rabideau Lake Camp enrollees interested in carpentry have recently completed repairing and refinishing worn out 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 examples 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.¹³

In addition to its accomplishments in the area of conservation, Rabideau Camp also had an important economic impact on the local community. As the local press predicted at the outset of the CCC project:

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

¹² "Company 708 CCC Camp Here is Enlarged," Blackduck American, 29 June 1938, 1.

¹³ "Enrollees Reconstruct Buildings at Camp," Blackduck American, 25 January 1940, 1.

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. . . .¹⁴

In addition, the Rabideau Camp developed a close relationship with the town of Blackduck and the surrounding community both from a social and civic standpoint. The camp played baseball and hockey matches with teams from Blackduck, held dances in the town, invited local community groups to dinner, 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 Blackduck American of 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. . . .

Not surprisingly, the community reacted strongly when the possibility of closing the Rabideau Camp was announced in May 1941. "Efforts are being made . . . by the Blackduck Community Club to get in touch with the proper authorities and get them to reconsider the action," noted the local newspaper. "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."¹⁵ But efforts to retain the camp proved unsuccessful. On June 12, 1941, the Blackduck American regretfully announced:

Blackduck will lose its CCC camp next Saturday, June 14. . . . 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.¹⁶

¹⁴ Blackduck American, May 1, 1935.

¹⁵ "Blackduck May Lose Rebedew Lake Camp," Blackduck American, May 29, 1941.

¹⁶ "Rebedew CCC Camp to Go Out Saturday," Blackduck American, June 12, 1941. 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 with the shift to wartime activities. The conservation agency ceased operations in June 1942.

The Rabideau Camp was one of 23 Civilian Conservation Corps camps to operate on the Chippewa National Forest during the Depression Era.¹⁷ Two camps, Thirteen Mile and Boy River, were originally state facilities, 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 work units, like Company 708 of the Rabideau Camp, occupied more than one camp.¹⁸

The CCC's tremendous manpower, accompanied by dramatic increases in federal funding, offered an unprecedented opportunity to expand the boundaries of the forest and implement active management policies. To fully assess the program's impact, it is helpful to review the history of the creation of the forest as well as the expansion and development which occurred during the Depression Era.

The establishment of the Chippewa National Forest dates from 1889, when Congressman Knute Nelson of Minnesota introduced a bill under which the Chippewa Indians ceded their lands and timber to the United States in exchange for their net value upon sale, plus individual allotments of land. However, as a result of numerous irregularities in the sale of the lands and timber, coupled with a growing sentiment for creating a forest reserve, the Morris Bill was passed on June 27, 1902. It provided that the Forester of the Department of Agriculture, with the approval of the Secretary of the Interior, should select 200,000 acres of pine land and 25,000 acres of agricultural land from four Chippewa Indian Reservations to become a National Forest Reserve. 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 Chippewa under rules prescribed by the Forester. However, 5% of the timber had to remain standing for

¹⁷ A complete listing of the CCC camps in the Chippewa National Forest, with numerical designation, is as follows: Pike Bay (F-12), Bena (F-13), Cut Foot Sioux (F-14), Winnibigoshish (F-15), Engineer Company (F-21), Schley (F-22), Burns Lake (F-23), Sand Lake (F-26), Inger (F-27), Big Lake (F-28), Mack (F-32), Day Lake (F-34), Stokes (F-35), Squaw Lake (F-36), Wirt (F-37), Cass Lake (F-42), Thirteen Mile (F-45), Remer (F-46), Longville (F-47), Walker (F-48), Boy River (F-49), Rabideau (F-50), and Dora Lake (F-51). One additional camp operated on the forest, the Leech Lake Wayside Park (SP-16), 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" indicated a national forest, with the U.S. Forest Service providing the supervisory personnel; "SP" indicated 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" indicated a national park, where activities were supervised by the National Park Service.

¹⁸ Keith W. Matson, "The Civilian Conservation Corps on the Chippewa National Forest," 1985.

purposes of reforestation. In addition, an area equal to ten sections (6,400 acres) had to be preserved. These included Star Island in Cass Lake, the islands in Leech Lake (along with land on Sugar and Pine Points), and lands surrounding Pike Bay on Cass Lake. 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.¹⁹ The Chippewa National Forest originally consisted of lands surrounding Lake Winnibigoshish and extending south to Leech Lake, with ranger stations located at Cass Lake, Bena, and Cut Foot Sioux. During the Depression Era, the 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 original 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 brought the total forest area to over 1.2 million acres. Roughly half was in federal ownership, with the remaining acreage held by the state or private parties. However, unlike the original forest, the expansion areas were generally cut-over or burnt-over lands, some of which had been left tax delinquent by the logging companies. Most of the area was in need of all aspects of forest improvement.

A "Ranger District Job Load," dated May 20, 1935, described the wide variety of conservation projects occurring on 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 36 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 in the district was studied, and even the number of livestock was estimated. At the time the report was prepared there were 13 CCC camps in operation on the forest, although a total of 23 were planned.

In 1938, the Forest Service noted that since the CCC's inception in 1933, the program had been responsible for replanting 23,000 acres in the Chippewa National Forest. 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 70-acre Lydick Tree Nursery, established in 1933, was producing 40,000,000 trees annually. Together with the Cass Lake Extractory, the Forest Service could extract, 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,

¹⁹ Gifford Pinchot, Breaking New Ground (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1947), 203-212.

artificial reforestation, experimental silviculture, water conservation, forest recreation, wild life management, and land acquisition all predicated on proper land use planning."²⁰

A variety of structural improvements were also occurring throughout the Chippewa National Forest. New ranger stations were built at Blackduck, Dora Lake, Marcell, 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 23 camp and picnic grounds. A picnic ground on Lake Cut Foot Sioux featured a partially enclosed shelter built with huge logs, which has now been moved to the Rabideau CCC Camp (Picnic Shelter, Building 29, HABS No. MN-147-Q). A wayside was built on Willow Lake which included a log bath house and extensive stone retaining walls and stairways. In addition, a camp was built on Ruby Lake for use by Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4-H and other organized groups. Still in use to this day, the camp consists of 23 buildings featuring vertical board and batten construction, organized in three collections of dormitory cabins around a central administrative core. One of the forest's most intriguing construction projects, and one which clearly demonstrates the possibilities offered by the manpower of the CCC, was an immense overlook built with fieldstone above a picturesque stream, but located on a remote, dirt forest road northeast of the Marcell Ranger Station. The forest's most impressive building was the Supervisor's Office at Cass Lake, a three-story structure with 8,500 square feet and 22 rooms.²¹

These conservation efforts and structural improvements reflected a broad change in forest administration from custodial care to intensive management. This change was described by forest supervisor James M. Walley in the Grand Rapids Herald-Review of October 31, 1934:

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

²⁰ Forest Service, Chippewa National Forest (N.p.: 1938), 4-18.

²¹ For additional information about the forest, refer to National Register Nominations for the "Forest Supervisor's Office" and the "Marcell Ranger Station."

far-reaching projects of today were merely ideals and mostly subjects for textbook writers. The CCC's have given us the opportunity to put into practical application the principals of forestry on a large scale and realize the ambitions of every forester.

The evolution of management practices on the Chippewa National Forest has also been described by H. Basil Wales, Chief of the Division of Timber Management in the North Central Region:

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.²²

Similar developments were occurring on Minnesota's Superior National Forest where approximately the same number of Civilian Conservation Corps 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, which included Minnesota, Michigan, Wisconsin, Iowa, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and North Dakota. In a booklet by the region's Milwaukee office, entitled "Two Years Afield with the C.C.C.," 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 been built to facilitate fire control, 112 lookout tower 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, and soil and water conservation measures were implemented, with particular emphasis on controlling erosion. Perhaps most telling was the dramatic expansion of

²² H. Basil Wales, "Evolution of Management on Chippewa," in Trees: The Yearbook of Agriculture, ed. the United States Department of Agriculture (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1949), 314-319.

the National Forests in the North Central Region. Prior to June 1933, gross acreage totaled 4,734,531. By April 1, 1935, the forest lands had been expanded to 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.²³

After the Rabideau CCC Camp closed in 1941, the property was left vacant until the end of World War II. Then, in August 1945, four representatives from the Department of Civil 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. 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. After sites in Illinois and Michigan were explored without success, the university began to seek a location in either Wisconsin or Minnesota.

Four CCC camps were inspected on the Chippewa National Forest -- Pike Bay, Bena, Cut Foot Sioux, and Rabideau. During the visit, several photographs were taken of the Rabideau Camp by university officials. 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.²⁴

It was a fortuitous day for the Rabideau Camp when the University of Illinois concluded that the

²³ In addition to the CCC camps, which operated on Minnesota's national forests, there were 31 camps in state forests, often under the technical guidance of the Forest Service, but in cooperation with the Division of Forestry of the Minnesota Department of Conservation; 21 camps on state and municipal parks and highway wayside projects under the supervision of the National Park Service and in cooperation with the Division of State Parks within the Minnesota Department of Conservation; and 14 camps 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.

²⁴ "Memorandum Concerning the Summer Surveying Camp Proposed by the Department of Civil Engineering," October 8, 1945, University Archives.

property would be the best suited for its summer school.²⁵ Correspondence continued with the Forest Service throughout the remainder of 1945. Finally, on December 11, 1945, the Forest Service received a telegram from the university stating, "Trustees approved camp and form of lease." The annual fee was placed at \$50.00, although there was an additional \$20.00 monthly for any building which housed families of university faculty.

The university was responsible for completing any changes to the camp and local contractors were hired for the work. The major issue involved providing a Mess Hall (Building No. 8, HABS No. MN-147-G) and Wash House (Building No. 14, HABS No. MN-147-M), since it had been noted that the original Mess Hall (Building No. 20, razed) and Bath House and Laundry (Building No. 21, razed) had "recently" burned in a fire. It was decided that the northernmost barracks would be converted to a Mess Hall (Building No. 8, HABS No. MN-147-G). As part of the remodeling, the Oil House (Building No. 22, HABS No. MN-147-R) was moved from the service yard and attached to the south face of the building to provide additional space. It first appeared that the university would construct a new bath house, but it was decided that toilets and showers would be installed in each of the student barracks. In addition, the Recreation Hall (Building No. 7, HABS No. MN-147-F) was converted into four apartments for university staff and a Wash House (Building No. 14, HABS No. MN-147-M) was constructed to house laundry facilities and a water heater for adjacent barracks. All modifications appear to have been made with salvaged materials from buildings in the service yard, as specified in the special use permit which stated, "Buildings numbered 18, 19, 24, and 25 are to be torn down by the permittee and the resulting salvage material is to be used in authorized construction and remodeling of camp buildings. . . ." ²⁶

Initially the university used four CCC barracks (Building No. 9, HABS No. MN-147-H; Building No. 10, HABS No. MN-147-I; Building No. 11, HABS No. MN-147-J; and Building No. 12, razed) for student dormitories. Two Barracks (Building No. 3, HABS No. MN-147-B and Building No. 5, HABS No. MN-147-D) and the Education Building (Building No. 4, HABS No. MN-147-C) were used as classrooms. Four buildings were set aside for faculty and staff housing (Building No. 2, HABS No. MN-147-A; Building No. 6, HABS No. MN-147-E; Building No. 7, HABS No. MN-147-F; and Building No. 13, HABS No. MN-147-L). Building No. 1 (Forest Service Office, razed) was used as an office, and Building No. 16 (Army Office

²⁵ Iowa 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.

²⁶ Buildings 19 and 24 were not torn down at that time because the university wanted to retain them for future use. However, discussions about certain buildings became somewhat confusing to both the university and the Forest Service because two different numbering systems were being used. At one point, a site plan was exchanged between the two parties to verify that they were referring to the same buildings. Ultimately, one numbering system was chosen and it remains. Based on the current numbering system, Buildings 19 and 24 are now referred to as Buildings 23 (Storage Garage, razed) and 27 (Blacksmith Shop, razed).

and Supply Room, razed) was used as a recreation hall. Power was provided by electrical generators located in the Pump House (Building No. 15, razed).

Sixty students attended the first summer program, which 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. During that same year, Barracks No. 6 (HABS No. MN-147-E) was converted into four apartments, as had been done previously with the Recreation Hall (Building No. 7, HABS No. MN-147-F).²⁷

In the summer of 1948, there were 115 students at the camp, in addition to 12 instructors and the camp manager. The buildings were rewired in the anticipation that electrical service would be extended to the camp by the rural electrical association, as in fact occurred in November. In 1949 the university replaced all of the roofing, painted all the buildings to their original color, and replaced several foundation timbers, including those for Building No. 13 (Army Officer's Quarters, HABS No. MN-147-L). Decayed timber on the Water Tower (Building No. 15A, HABS No. MN-147-N) was also repaired.

The University of Illinois 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 apparently occurred in 1958, when 138 students attended.

The university continued to provide maintenance. As the camp's director, Ralph W. Lorenz explained in 1966:

Last year I spent about \$1000.00 for major repairs on the camp. Our major difficulty is that the wooden underpinnings rot out causing the floors to settle. This is very hard on our plumbing. Major repairs were made on buildings 6 and 17 [Barracks, HABS No. MN-147-E and Hospital, HABS No. MN-147-O]; less work was done on 9 and 11 [Barracks, HABS No. MN-147-H and HABS No. MN-147-J]. I have asked Henry Reber to start major repair work on the kitchen [Building No. 8, Mess Hall, HABS No. MN-147-G] as soon as it is convenient for him. If I have sufficient funds, I plan to do some repair work on buildings 2 and 4 [Forest Service Officer's Quarters, HABS No. MN-147-A and Education Building, HABS No. MN-147-C].²⁸

On November 14, 1972, Lorenz wrote the Forest Service indicating the school's continued

²⁷ W.C. Huntington to C.C. Wiley, August 3, 1947; Huntington to Wiley, August 7, 1947, University Archives.

²⁸ Ralph W. Lorenz to Forest Service, August 7, 1966, in University Archives.

interest in the site, but also noting that "every passing year the camp becomes more difficult to maintain in ready repair, especially the plumbing." Three days later, the State Fire Marshall wrote the Forest Service asking for a number of changes and improvements at the camp. Correspondence was exchanged between the university and the Forest Service to determine how these needs could be met, but the university ultimately decided to end its program at the Rabideau Camp. 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.²⁹

The university's special use permit for the Rabideau Camp was formally terminated on June 21, 1973. Discussions about the future of the camp occurred during the 1970s, with options ranging from complete preservation to total demolition. Then on June 16, 1976, the Rabideau Camp was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Forest Service subsequently developed a management plan for the camp calling for the restoration of the Mess Hall (Building No. 8, HABS No. MN-147-G), Hospital (Building No. 17, HABS No. MN-147-O), Army Officer's Quarters (Building No. 13, HABS No. MN-147-13), and one barracks (Building No. 11, HABS No. MN-147-J). The remaining buildings were to be removed as they deteriorated. In fact, there had been a policy to remove buildings which were no longer in use as early as 1946. Some buildings were dismantled and the materials were used in later construction and remodelling by the University of Illinois. Several other buildings were destroyed by fire. The following listing includes those buildings which are no longer extant:

Mess Hall (Building No. 20): The original CCC Mess Hall was a T-shaped building which included a 20' x 105' dining hall and a 20' x 60' extension for the kitchen. The walls were decorated with large murals featuring landscapes painted by a CCC enrollee. In 1945, the University of Illinois noted that the building had been destroyed "recently" by fire. The only known photograph of the building was taken about 1940 by CCC enrollee James M. Egan.³⁰

Bath House and Laundry (Building No. 21): This 20' x 70' building was destroyed in the same

²⁹ The university transferred its summer program to the Isabella Environmental Learning Center on Minnesota's Superior National Forest.

³⁰ A photocopy of the photograph is located in a file on the Rabideau Camp in the Forest Supervisor's Office, Cass Lake, Minnesota.

fire that destroyed the Mess Hall. Apparently many of the interior fixtures were salvaged.

Barracks (Building No. 12): This 20' x 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 vacant and apparently in some disrepair. This building, along with Building No. 18 (see below), may have been sold to the local Fair Board in November 1966.

Pump House (Building No. 15): This 20' x 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 (Building No. 16): Also, known as the Headquarters Building, this 20' x 114' building provided office space for the Forest Service in the west end of the building (until the agency's staff moved to Building No. 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 (Building No. 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. Ultimately, the building overall dimensions were 20' x 42'. The building was demolished in 1988.

Storage Garage (Building No. 18): This 22' x 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 Fair Board along with Building No. 12 (see above).

Tool House (Building No. 19): This 20' x 50' building featured loading platforms and a canopy along one side. It was used to store and repair all the camp's tools. The University of Illinois also used the building to store surveying instruments. After the roof collapsed in 1986, the building was razed. The Tool House was the last building to remain in the service yard.

Oil House (Building No. 22): This 20' x 24' building was moved and attached to Building No. 8 in 1946 to form the Mess Hall (HABS No. MN-147-G) for the University of Illinois.

Storage Garage (Building No. 23): This 48' x 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 No. 19, razed) was constructed. The building was demolished in 1950, after the University of Illinois no longer had any use for it.

Storage Garage (Building No. 24): This 20' x 54' building was apparently used to store vehicles, equipment, and perhaps lumber. It was demolished in 1946. Salvaged materials from

this building were probably used by the University of Illinois for construction and remodeling projects at the camp.

Repair Shop (Building No. 25): This 32' x 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 received on-the-job training at the shop. The building appears to have been demolished by 1950.

Equipment Shed (Building No. 26): This 33' x 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 (Building No. 27): This 20' x 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.

Coal House (Building No. 28): This 20' x 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.

The Forest Service's restoration of the Mess Hall (Building No. 8, HABS No. MN-147-G), Hospital (Building No. 17, HABS No. MN-147-O), Army Officer's Quarters (Building No. 13, HABS No. MN-147-I), and the Barracks (Building No. 11, HABS No. MN-147-J) was completed in 1986. The CCC-built log Picnic Shelter (Building No. 29, HABS No. MN-147-Q) was also moved to the camp the same year. The Rabideau Camp is open to the public, and during the summer months former CCC enrollees are available for guided tours. Company 708 held its first annual reunion at the camp in 1970, a tradition which continues to this day. The Forest Service has recently formed a partnership with the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota in order to increase the number of buildings which will be preserved at the site.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Setting, Orientation, and Landscape Features

The Rabideau CCC Camp is located off Beltrami County Highway 39 on a tract of land between Lake Carls and Lake Benjamin. The legal description of the property is Township 148 North, Range 31 West, Section 13, Lot 1, with the developed area encompassing roughly 20 acres. Principal common-use buildings are located at the center of the camp on a north-south axis. Barracks and other support buildings are located to the east and west, and lake views exist from certain buildings on the perimeter. The camp's unpaved road system forms a central loop, with

convenient access to the majority of the buildings.

The buildings are sited within a picturesque stand of paper birch, many of which clearly predate the construction of the camp. In fact, it appears that care was taken to preserve many of the trees. In addition to the dominant birch, other species within the overstory include basswood, ash, burr oak, and elm. The central portion of the camp, as well as the picnic area, is currently mowed, while the remaining areas of the understory consist of consist of grass and low herbaceous plants. Three cedar hedgerows, believed to have been planted by the CCC, are also located at the camp; one just south of the Hospital (Building No. 17, HABS No. MN-147-O), one along the eastern edge of the entrance road, and the third just south of the Education Building (Building No. 4, HABS No. MN-147-C).³¹

B. Architectural Character

Civilian Conservation Corps camps of the Depression Era consist of three distinct types: tent camps, rigid camps, and portable camps. In each case, the camps were built to Army guidelines and specifications, and thus a certain uniform appearance exists regardless of location.³² 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. 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 featuring standard frame construction were used to replace the tent camps and became the typical construction method. Experimentation with portable buildings began as early as 1933-34 because of the high salvage value. In 1937, portable buildings, which could be bolted together in sections, were adopted as the standard building type.³³ Regardless of the type of camp, an installation typically housed two hundred men and generally consisted of roughly 20 buildings, including the appropriate number of barracks, a mess hall, hospital, latrine, office, staff quarters for the army and technical services, a recreation building, and a variety of service and support structures. The buildings were usually simple, rectangular frame structures with low-pitch gable roofs, all arranged in several rows in close proximity.

CCC camps were never considered permanent structures and the minimal frame structures were

³¹ Charles Wingard, "Vegetative Management Plan for Rabideau Historic Site/Picnic Area," 1984.

³² Regional styles or variations, as seen in several Minnesota camps which featured palisade log construction, would be considered notable exceptions to the expected appearance of a CCC camp.

³³ Alison, 77-81.

almost always destroyed or dismantled after a particular project was completed. For this reason very few buildings survive from the nation's CCC camps, which are believed to have once numbered about 4,500. In Minnesota, a pump house survives from camp SP-19 at Itasca State Park, while 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.

The only other collection of Minnesota CCC camp buildings, comparable to those at the Rabideau Camp, is found at the Norris Camp. Only briefly occupied by the CCC, the facility was transferred to the Resettlement Administration, which greatly expanded the property. Considerable alteration and new construction have taken place, and its significance is predominantly associated with a federal relief effort undertaken by the Resettlement Administration known as the Beltrami Island Project, rather than the CCC.

Nationally, at least one other camp may remain relatively intact, namely the Birch Creek Camp in the Beaverhead National Forest in Montana, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Tree Army: A Pictorial History of the Civilian Conservation Corps, 1933-1942 by Stan Cohen notes that "the best preserved original CCC Camp, Camp Rabideau, is located six miles south of Blackduck, Minnesota in the Chippewa National Forest." It represents a rare, surviving example of a CCC camp property type.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Original Architectural Drawings:

The oldest known site plan of the camp, entitled "Rabideau Camp F-50", is located in the Civil Engineering Subject File Record Series 11/5/1 at the University Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The file contains several additional site plans prepared by the university, which document various changes at the site. An undated site plan found in a file on the Rabideau Camp at the Forest Supervisor's Office, Cass Lake, MN, depicts the camp about 1945, just prior to occupancy by the University of Illinois; it refers to all buildings based on their usage by the CCC.

B. Early Views:

Several historic photographs are found in Civilian Conservation Corps, Minnesota District, and Minnesota CCC History, copies of which are located in a file on the Rabideau Camp in the

Forest Supervisor's Office in Cass Lake, Minnesota. A number of photographs are also located in a picture file on the CCC at the Iron Range Research Center in Chisholm, Minnesota. Among the most interesting are a series taken about 1940 by CCC enrollee James M. Egan. They include a variety of views throughout the camp and feature several buildings and structures for which no known photographs exist. Photocopies also are located at the Forest Supervisor's Office in Cass Lake, Minnesota.

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D. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated:

The most likely sources of information have been investigated, including the holdings of the Chippewa National Forest, Forest Supervisor's Office in Cass Lake, Minnesota; the Iron Range Research Center in Chisholm, Minnesota; the University Archives, University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign, Illinois; The Blackduck American in Blackduck, Minnesota; and Records of the Civilian Conservation Corps, Record Group 35, National Archives in Washington, D.C. However, the actual records of the Rabideau Camp which were maintained on site by both the Army and the Forest Service have not been located. If they exist, it is likely they would provide additional information about the camp. It is also possible, although not particularly likely, that information about the camp could be located within the Records of the U.S. Forest Service, Record Group 95, at the National Archives in Washington, D.C.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This documentation project was prepared under a contract between the Chippewa National Forest of the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service and Hess, Roise and Company of Minneapolis, Minnesota. Jeffrey A. Hess served as the contractor's project administrator. On a subcontract basis, Rolf T. Anderson of Minneapolis served as Principal Investigator and Project Historian. He was assisted with documentary research by Hess Roise staff historian, Shawn P. Rounds. Project photography was the subcontract responsibility of Jerry Mathiason, also of Minneapolis.