

LOLETA RECREATION AREA  
Allegheny National Forest  
Six miles southeast of the  
intersection of State Highway  
24041 and State Route 66  
~~Marionville~~ Vicinity  
Elk County  
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5963

HABS  
PA  
24-LOL.V,  
2-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
Northeast Region  
U. S. Custom House  
200 Chestnut Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

LOLETA RECREATION AREA

HABS  
PA  
24-LOL.V,  
2-

HABS No. PA-5963

Location: Allegheny National Forest  
Six miles southeast of the intersection of  
State Highway 24041 and State Route 66  
**LOLETA** Marienville Vicinity  
Elk County  
Pennsylvania

U.S.G.S. Marienville East Quadrangle  
U.T.M. Coordinates:  
17.660400.4584700

Present Owner  
and Occupant: Allegheny National Forest

Present Use: National Forest/Loleta Recreational Facility

Significance: Constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps between the years of 1933 and 1936. The CCC work project was initiated by President Roosevelt to put young men to work while at the same time assisting in the national conservation of the state and national forests and parks. The rustic style of architecture is unique to the CCC work project and is evident in the structures and engineering features at the Loleta Recreation Area.

For documentation regarding the Upper Dam, please refer to HAER No. PA-279-A and for the Lower Dam, please refer to HAER No. PA-279-B.

### Part I - History Of The Loleta Recreation Area

The Civilian Conservation Corps was the combined effort of many government units to provide work for unemployed males during the Great Depression. CCC camps were spread across the country. It was devised to cope with national conservation needs as well as unemployment, a collective response to the worsening economic conditions of 1933 (Otis, et al 1986:1).

On January 20, 1933, Franklin D. Roosevelt became President of the United States amidst the Great Depression. Millions of Americans suffered from unemployment. In 1933, unemployment affected over twenty-five percent of the nation's work force, as opposed to little over three percent in 1929 (Paige 1985:2). In his first 100 days in office, President Roosevelt initiated several programs to stimulate the country's economy and work force. The most popular program created under the New Deal was the Civilian Conservation Corps. The Civilian Conservation Corps was "to be used in simple work, not interfering with normal employment, and confining itself to forestry, the prevention of soil erosion, flood control, and similar projects" (Cohen 1980:6). Congress acted on Roosevelt's legislation and on March 31, 1933 created an Act for the Relief of Unemployment Through The Performance of Useful Public Work. Roosevelt named Robert Fechner as director of the Emergency Conservation Work (ECW) but the name Civilian Conservation Corps used by Roosevelt remained. The Civilian Conservation Corps did not officially exist until Congress changed the agency's name in June of 1937 (Forrey 1984:25; O'Bannon 1986).

The Departments of Labor, War, Interior and Agriculture worked together to organize the new agency. The Department of Labor recruited the men; clothing was provided by the Army which also managed the camps. Control of the work accomplished by the CCC was done under the direction of the Department of Interior's National Park Service and the Department of Agriculture's Forest Service (Otis, et al 1986).

The CCC's accomplishments in the conservation of natural resources overshadows its success as a relief agency. The Corps' primary purpose was the conservation of the nation's soil and forests. Approximately seventy-five percent of all CCC camps engaged in this type of work, and half of these worked at protecting and improving forest resources (Salmond 1967:121; O'Bannon 1986). These tasks included structural improvement, transportation, erosion control, flood control, forest culture, forest protection, landscape and recreation, range, wildlife and miscellaneous emergency work (Merrill 1981:9).

The CCC's construction of recreational facilities represented the New Deal's ideals regarding man's coexistence with nature. The majority of the CCC's structures are examples of rustic architecture which calls for the use of natural materials, extensive handwork and resembling the American log cabin. The log construction, high quality masonry work and specialized materials such as wane-edged siding and hand-forged hardware are evidence of the CCC's skills. Many of the CCC's structures have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places. To this date rustic architecture symbolizes the nation's state and national parks (O'Bannon 1986).

The Civilian Conservation Corps was divided into nine regions around the country. Region 7 contained the following states: Connecticut, Delaware, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia and West Virginia. Seven of these states had national forest lands, Pennsylvania being one of them. Approximately twenty percent of the CCC's work in the region was performed on its national forests. About seven percent of the country's CCC work on national forests was done in Region 7. The CCC was also put to work cleaning up damaged areas and constructing control devices for flooding in Pennsylvania in 1936. The CCC helped clear trails, build bridges and shelters for hikers, most notable for the Appalachian Trail which passed through Pennsylvania (Otis et al 1986:55-56). Other work accomplished by the CCC's in Pennsylvania included impounding large diversion dams (102), building truck trails and minor roads (3,273 miles), planting trees and reforestation (59,806,000 trees), controlling tree and plant

diseases (406,059 acres), creating fish breeding ponds (1,698) and improving the forest stand (201,468 acres)(Merrill 1981:168).

The CCC construction works have been divided into five broad categories based on function: CCC camps, organized group camps, family cabins, day use facilities, and maintenance areas (O'Bannon and Henry 1986). The Loleta Recreation Area is an example of a day use facility. The presence of a small, man-made lake is typical of larger day use areas. The Loleta Recreation Area facility includes a dam, a bath house, and three picnic shelters built by CCC workers and a tool shed which dates to the CCC era. Other structures found at large, day use areas built by the CCC can include latrines and concession stands. The CCC also built fire places, hiking trails, and bridges and added utility (water, sewer, and electric) systems to some facilities.

Although the CCC did have standard building plans, variations did exist between many of the constructions. Picnic shelters exhibit variations in size, support column material (unhewn stone or logs), and the presence or absence of extra features such as fireplaces, fixed tables, or railing between columns. The shelter roof is pyramid shaped. Dams were built in keeping with the rustic architecture feeling and aesthetic values of harmony with neutral surrounding. The actual construction may vary, but the visible part of a dam is faced with rough cut stone. Variations in design can also occur on other CCC constructions such as bath houses and park offices, both of which are found at the Loleta Recreation Area.

In 1933, work began at the Loleta Recreation Area for the Allegheny National Forest by the CCC camp located near Marienville (Michael Schultz, Historian). On June 26, 1935 Company 2329 was established in a tent camp near the Big Salmon Bridge in the Allegheny National Forest approximately four miles from Marienville. In September, 1935 the company abandoned the tent camp and moved into barracks constructed one mile closer to Marienville. In May of 1936, projects included the improvement of the Loleta Forest Camp located six miles southeast of Marienville. Land was cleared for campsites, trails forged, phone lines installed, stationing of lifeguards at the swimming pond and landscaping were conducted. A hand built dam eight feet in height was erected out of stone as well as picnic shelters and a bath house, which was located on the site of the steam engine house (NACCCA files).

The present landscape and layout of the Loleta Recreation Area was compared to the original 1936-1939 layout and planting designs. While the trees have matured, it appears that the day use area still retains the original design set by the CCC's. It does appear that not all of the types of trees planned for the recreation area were planted as they were not visible during the visual inspection of the site. The buildings have remained in their original location with the exception of the office building (tool shed) which was moved near the parking lot after the completion of the dams and bath house. The picnic shelters still offer day use visitors eating shelter from the sun and rain. All remain in their original locations and are surrounded by mature hard woods and pines. The bath house originally provided day use visitors and overnight campers a building in which to change clothing and use toilet facilities. The exterior of the structure has not changed over the years but the interior has undergone rehabilitation work. Additional changing stalls, wash sinks, toilets and sitting benches were added in 1979 to accommodate more visitors using the swimming pond. In 1990 the interior to the bath house was gutted in preparation of creating a museum in the bath house. The office building, which was the original tool shed, was moved from its original location near the bath house. It is presently located near the recreation area's entrance and serves as an information building, office and storage facility for the camp host. The upper and lower dams are still operational and are in their original form. Yearly maintenance has retained the field stone and cut stone work performed by the CCC's.

The Loleta Recreation Area still retains the original rustic landscaping features and feeling originally designed by the CCC's in the 1930s. The Allegheny National Forest strives to preserve this facility in its' original/natural environment.

Part II - Sources of Information:

A. Historic Photographs:

Photographs of the Loleta Recreation Area show several views of the various construction periods. Photographs show the tool shed (HABS PA-5963-C), bath house (HABS PA-5963-A), picnic shelters (HABS PA-5963-B) and the upper (HAER PA-279-A) and lower (HAER PA-279-B) dams. These structures are described in their respective documentation work. The original photographs are located at the United States Department of Agriculture - Forest Service - Allegheny National Forest Supervisors Office in Warren, Pennsylvania.

B. Landscape Architectural Drawings:

Original drawings are available on the design plan of the Loleta Recreation Camp Area. Original Design Plan drawing dated April 16, 1936, and signed by A. W. Crosby; Loleta Forest Camp Drainage Scheme drawing dated November 23, 1935, and signed by Paul V. Wakefield; Planting Plan for the Loleta Forest Camp dated June 22, 1936, and signed by A. W. Crosby; Loleta Recreation Site Plan dated 1979 and signed by R. Gallo; and Loleta Recreation Area Renovation Site Plan dated May, 1990 and signed by J. Ball. All of these drawings are located in the map filing room of the Allegheny National Forest Supervisors Office located in Warren, Pennsylvania.

C. Bibliography:

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Part III - Project Information:

This report was prepared by Archaeological Services Consultants, Inc.'s architectural historian Deborah L. Dobson-Brown, M.S. for the United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Allegheny National Forest as part of a larger cultural resources survey of the Loleta Recreation Area. This project involved archaeological and architectural surveying of the sawmill town of Loleta which was located at the Loleta Recreation Area. This survey was conducted in the winter and spring of 1993 by Archaeological Services Consultants, Inc. for the Allegheny National Forest at their request. Large format photographs were contributed by photographer, Deborah L. Dobson-Brown.

Other reports in the HABS collection completed for this project include: a short form of the Loleta Recreation Area, Bath House (PA-5963-A), a short form of the Loleta Recreation Area, Picnic Pavilion (PA-5963-B) and a short form of the Loleta Recreation Area, Office Building (PA-5963-C). Other reports in the HAER collection completed for this project include: an overview history of the Loleta Recreation Area, Upper Dam (PA-279-A) and an overview history of the Loleta Recreation Area, Lower Dam (PA-279-B). These reports are incorporated in the prepared report A Cultural Resource Examination Of The Loleta Recreation Area, Millstone Township, Elk County, Pennsylvania by Lori Frye, Deborah Dobson-Brown, Herb Beamer and Robert Corso for Archaeological Services Consultants, Inc., submitted to the United States Department of Agriculture, Allegheny National Forest, 1993.

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