

Boulder Creek

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California Conservation Corps Eyes Big Basin Center

By MARK BERGSTROM
Sentinel Staff Writer

To the young crewmembers of the California Conservation Corps, the job program is just as relevant today as it was in the depression days of the '30s.

Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. reconstituted Franklin D. Roosevelt's program on the state level in July 1976 to provide job opportunities for thousands of unemployed California young people.

Fifteen centers have been established since that time, from which the 18 to 20-year-old crewmembers perform a variety of public service and conservation chores.

The CCC plans to open eight more centers in the state by the end of summer and, hopefully, one of them will be located near Big Basin State Park above Boulder Creek.

Crews have been working to clean up madrone and tan bark debris on the forest floor, caused when the uncommon snow storm of 1973 felled the trees. The CCC has a one-year contract, which began last January, to remove the debris which has become fuel for a potentially catastrophic wildfire.

the state have been rotating on 10-day details to the Santa Cruz mountains, living in a spike camp near the entrance to Big Basin.

So far the crews have cleaned up 250 acres, removing between 200 and 250 tons of debris per acre.

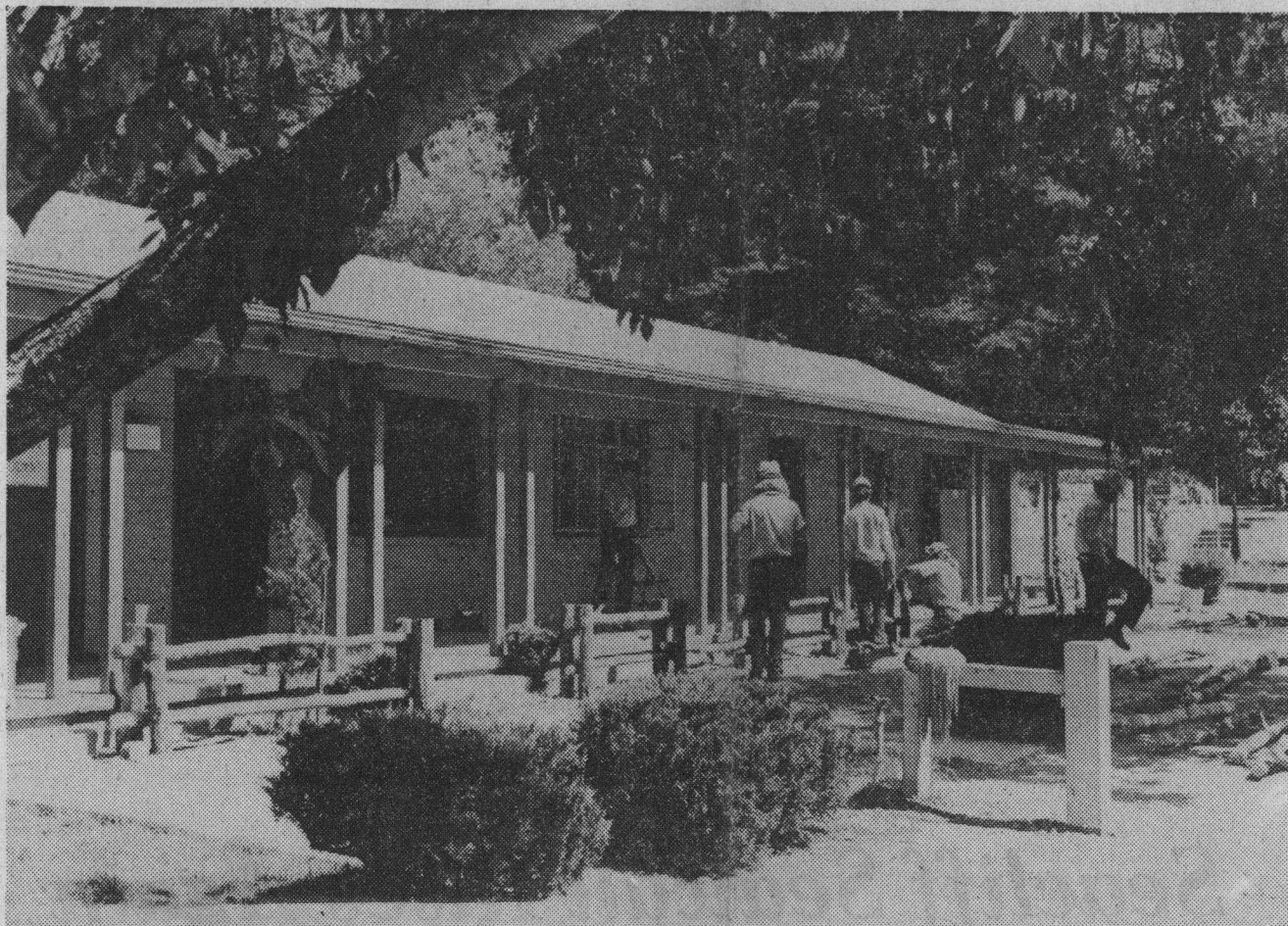
CCC Deputy Director Richard Ybarra has spent the past three weeks at the spike camp, which draws its name from the state's railroading days, and hopes to turn it into a permanent center.

"I've certainly found the need for a center in this area," he says.

Frank Garcia, work coordinator for the camp, says that could be accomplished by either being granted an extension of the parks department contract or by finding other projects.

If the camp becomes a permanent center, says crew leader Liz Rodriguez, the Boulder Creek facility would house a permanent crew of 60.

The CCC program is open to all California residents between the ages of 18 and 20 on a one-year contract, for which they are paid a starting salary of \$325 per month. Pay increases to \$450 by the ninth



CCC crew members build fence around barracks near Boulder Creek.

a forest service career.

After completing two years of college, Mills joined the CCC "because experience is helpful in getting a job with the forest service."

Not yet through his first year of the program yet, Mills is starting to think of a new career. "I really like this program and would like to get on the staff," he says.

Mills is currently detailed to the Boulder Creek spike camp

where he is supervising work around the camp by the visiting crewmembers.

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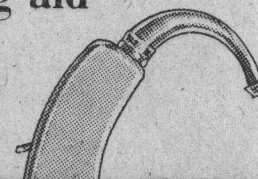
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Cindy James, 30, of Tustin, crew leader in charge of food services, rings dinner bell.



CCC crew members build fence around barracks near Boulder Creek.

Members can reapply for a second year in the program, and Ybarra says some 75 percent of the first-year workers did so last year.

Selection to the CCC, Ybarra says, is on a first-come, first-served basis with applications available at state Employment Development Department offices.

Once selected, candidates undergo four weeks of intensive training in public service and

conservation work, leadership training, first aid, tool use and safety at the CCC academy at Bret Harte in Calaveras County.

From there, the new crewmembers are assigned to the various centers, most of which are located in the Sierras and other regions of Northern California.

Education continues at the camps, where such subjects as food preparation, agriculture,

animal husbandry and fire-fighting are taught.

Crewmembers learn to fight fires and methods of flood control because they respond to a variety of state emergencies during the year.

This past week, for example, 11, 10-man crews were called on to help fight a series of brush fires throughout California.

CCC crews last winter helped Santa Barbara clean up and Los

Angeles dig out after the savage rains storms.

Some 1,200 young California men and women are currently employed by the CCC and have put in nearly 600,000 hours of public service and conservation work, ranging from fighting the fires to planting a million trees statewide.

Most of the crewmembers, like leader Charlie Mills of Palos Verdes, are hoping the experience will open the door to



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