

## INTO THE MOUNTAINS

It is 1899 & the **Pittsburg, Westmoreland, & Somerset (PW&S) railroad** just made its first trip into the Laurel mountains. Industrialization is booming around the country, & the timber industry in southwestern Pennsylvania is in full swing. The development of this new railway system has allowed for easier access to timber, resulting in the over harvesting of natural resources.

**Deer Make Escape.**  
All but two of the deer recently placed on the State game preserve near Ligonier have escaped. It is hoped to recapture them. Nineteen does and two bucks were placed on the preserve just a week ago.

Local headline about deer escaping from reserve after restocking the area, Daily Courier, Connellsville, Pennsylvania, 1912.

During the late 1800s & early 1900s, timber was harvested by complete removal of trees from mountain slopes, resulting in erosion, habitat destruction, & loss of natural biodiversity. The unlivable conditions and lack of hunting regulations in the forest resulted in the loss of wildlife, including PA's

most famous resident, the white tail deer. By the early 1900s, deer populations were so low

that they were almost **extirpated**, or locally extinct from our state! After years of unsustainable logging and uncontrolled wildfires, tracts of the Forest were reduced to treeless, barren landscapes, leading to the last run of the PW&S railroad in 1916.



Forest devastation from mountain slope clearing was a common sight throughout PA during the late 1800s to early 1900s, Potter County, Pennsylvania. (Photo courtesy of PA State Archives.)

Today, *Forbes State Forest is much different than it was 100 years ago.* Over time, the Forest has **regenerated** into lush woodlands, sustaining a diversity of plants & animals, such as the timber rattlesnake, black bear, turkey, ruffed grouse, & white tail deer. Foresters today understand forest ecology & have implemented **Ecosystem Management** to oversee all forestry operations. This sustainable practice focuses on all aspects of a forest ecosystem, promoting healthy forests, clean water, & balanced timber production. Thanks to the adoption of sustainable forestry management, timber extraction & public land use are both encouraged today at Forbes State Forest.

## CONSERVATION AT WORK

Hardworking, dedicated, & iconic are only a few words to describe the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). The CCC was an idea birthed from Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal, to provide work for young men during the Great Depression. Unemployed, single men ages 18-25 were sought after to enroll in the conservation corps to work for \$30 a month, unknowingly developing today's state parks & forests.

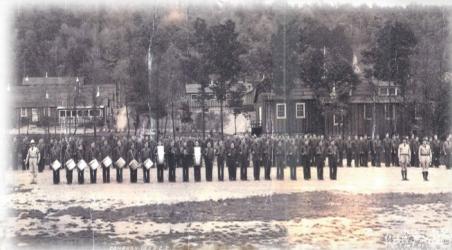
### CCC Enrollment Applications Being Received

GREENSBURG, July 1.—Applications for the July enrollment into the Civilian Conservation Corps are being received by representatives of the Westmoreland County Board of Public Assistance, Executive Director Francis J. McDonough announced. The quota for Westmoreland county has been fixed at 243 and the examinations will be conducted July 10, 12, 14 and 19.

Newspaper headline from the Daily Courier, Connellsville, Pennsylvania, 1939.

During the 1930s Pennsylvania had a total of 113 CCC camps, 4 of these were camps located within Forbes State Forest: *S-98 Bluehole (1933-1936)*; *S-12 Fort Necessity (1935-38)*; *S-99 Kooser (1933-40)*; & *S-97 Negro Mountain (1933-37)*. The men of the CCC planted trees, managed surrounding natural areas, & created roadways & trails that still meander through the Forest today. While visiting the

Negro Mountain division, you will stumble upon remnants of one of the CCC camps (S-97), including 2 cabins & a stone foundation.



Men at CCC Camp S-97, Salisbury, PA, on October 17, 1935. (Photo courtesy of Ligonier Valley Library.)



Restored CCC Cabin at Negro Mountain (S-97), present-day (Photo courtesy of Bureau of Forestry.)

## DID YOU KNOW?

- **The Bureau of Forestry began over 115 years ago!**
- **Joseph Rothrock became the first Commissioner of Forestry in 1895 & was also known as the 'Father of Forestry.'**
- **The first purchase of state forest land was in 1898!**
- **Forbes State Forest is a total of 60,665 acres - That's bigger than the size of Washington D.C.!**
- **The first Forbes State Forest land purchase in 1909 cost \$5 per acre!**
- **In 1930 & 1933 the Eastern Hemlock & Mountain Laurel are adopted as Pennsylvania's state tree & flower!**

### FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Bureau of Forestry • Forbes Forest District 4  
1291 Route 30, P.O. Box 519  
Laughlintown, PA 15655-0519

phone:724-238-1200 • email: FD04@pa.gov  
www.dcnr.state.pa.us

In the case of an emergency, contact a DCNR employee or dial 911.

Cover photos credited to Ligonier Valley Library & PA Bureau of Forestry.

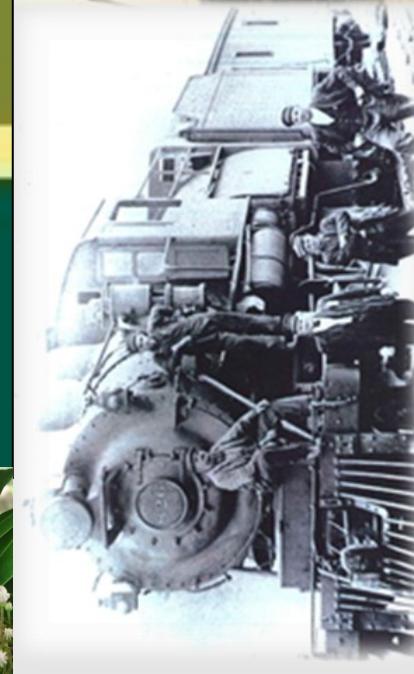
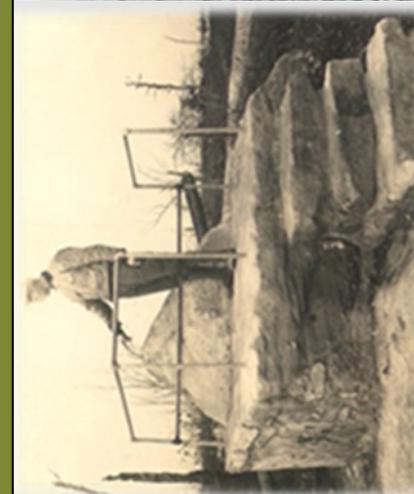
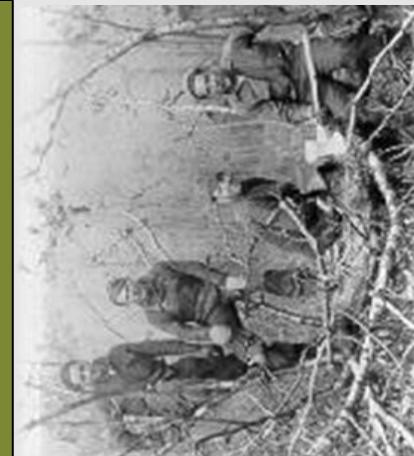


Last edit 7/2013



Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry

Forbes State Forest: Celebrating 100 Years



# A GLIMPSE INTO THE PAST

Background photographs, left to right: PW&S railroad hauling timber & Pondfield fire tower.

(Photos courtesy of Ligonier Valley Library & Bureau of Forestry.)

**1909**

The Commonwealth purchases 8,532 acres of land from the Byers & Allen Lumber Company. This forest land is the first of its kind to be purchased within the Ohio River Watershed. Due to its location in both Westmoreland & Somerset Counties, this tract of land is granted the name, the Westmoreland-Somerset Forest reserve.



CCC logo, circa 1933.



Byers-Allen Lumber Co., Ligonier, PA



Loggers sawing timber, circa late 1890s-early 1900s

**1920**

The Stuart Forest Reserve earns the name, Forbes State Forest, in memory of British General John Forbes, who planned an attack on Fort Duquesne in the French & Indian War.

**1929**

The Commonwealth acquires 4,697 acres from Anna E. Humes. This land is present-day Mt. Davis, the highest point in Pennsylvania (3,213 ft.).

**1953**

Allegheny, Westmoreland, Somerset, Fayette, Washington, & Greene Counties combine, forming District 4 of the Bureau of Forestry, Forbes State Forest.

**1913**

The Forest's first fire tower, Bald Eagle, is constructed.

**1925**

Kooser Public Camp is developed.

**1935**

The observation tower at Mt. Davis is built. Also constructed this year are the Pondfield & Bald Knob fire towers.

**1957**

Forbes' first timber sale is marked & sold.

**1971**

The Department of Forests & Water evolves into a part of the new agency, the Department of Environmental Resources (DER).

**1995**

About 1,707 more acres acquired in the Laurel Mountain division.

**2008**

Barron Tract, 2,300 acres, is acquired. This is the most recent land acquisition to date.

**1921**

Adams Falls & Laurel Summit Public Camps are established & the Sugarloaf fire tower is constructed.

**1933**

The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) sets up four camps in the Forbes: Negro Mountain, Fort Necessity, Blue Hole, & Kooser areas.

**1955**

Forbes State Forest develops its first Timber Management plan to responsibly guide timber operations.

**1970**

Forbes implements the Forest Resource Plan, designating the land viable for natural resource exploration, wildlife conservation, & outdoor recreation.

**1998**

The Bureau of Forestry, including Forbes State Forest receives Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification.

**1916**

The Pittsburg, Westmoreland, & Somerset Rail Road (PW&S) closes after servicing both the lumber & tourism industry for over a decade.

**1910**

In honor of Pennsylvania's governor, Edwin S. Stuart, the Westmoreland Somerset Forest Reserve is renamed the Stuart Forest Reserve.

Forbes Forest District Headquarters in Ligonier burns in a fire, destroying the building & all of its contents, including historical records.

**1949**

A total of 2,351 acres is purchased from the Indian Creek Coal & Coke Company, becoming what is today referred to as the Braddock Division of Forbes.

**1962**

Both Fort Necessity & the Braddock Monument are turned over from the Commonwealth's ownership to the National Park Service.

**1974**

About 10,775 acres of land (Laurel Mountain Division) are acquired from the Western PA Conservancy. Included in this purchase is 3,593 acres, later known as Roaring Run Natural Area.

**2003**

Ecosystem Management becomes the new, widely-accepted management practice for the Bureau of Forestry.

**2009**

John R. Williams is appointed the first District Forester.