

## PRESS RELEASE

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### Historic monument welcomes visitors to Fort Missoula Regional Park

A 6-foot tall, 460-pound “CCC Worker” will greet visitors at the entrance to Fort Missoula Regional Park when the new park opens next spring. Local historians gathered with City and County staff to unveil the new statue last Friday.

The statue honors Fort Missoula’s heritage as the headquarters of one of the country’s largest Civilian Conservation Corps districts in the 1930s and ‘40s. The Corps was established during the Great Depression of the 1930s as part of FDR’s New Deal. According to Tate Jones, executive director of the Rocky Mountain Museum of Military History at Fort Missoula, the CCC put unemployed young men to work on national conservation projects. U.S. Army units, such as Fort Missoula’s 4th Infantry Regiment, supervised the Corps’ logistical needs.

Fort Missoula processed and trained over 17,600 Civilian Conservation Corpsmen over the nine years of the CCC (1933-1942), Jones said. Deployed in 24 camps around the state, Montana Corpsmen served the growing American belief in resource conservation by reforesting logging areas, reversing soil erosion, building wildlife refuges, and improving visitor services in Glacier and Yellowstone national parks. During their service, the Montana CCC men planted nearly 5.5 million trees, erected 458 dams, and constructed 776 bridges.

“Because of the work the CCC provided, the CCC era was one of our nation’s greatest investments in parks and public lands and thus a monumental time period in the Parks and Recreation industry,” says Parks and Recreation Director Donna Gaukler.

“From the Bella Vista pavilion to picnic shelters to wayfinding, the park’s design honors and interprets Fort Missoula’s rich history,” Gaukler said. The park’s distinctive architecture echoes the national park structures built in the 30s and 40s by the Conservation Corps, with the use of harmonious natural materials like large timbers and stone fixtures. Historic interpretation panels introduce visitors to Fort Missoula’s 140-year history and lead them to explore the wonderful historical museums adjacent to the park,” Gaukler said.

The statue comes from Civilian Conservation Corps Legacy, a non-profit organization dedicated to research, preservation, and education to promote a better understanding of the CCC. The monument was created in 1995 under the sponsorship of several Michigan chapters of the National Association of CCC Alumni (NACCCA) and has been installed in 67 other locations throughout the country. The monument informs Americans of the legacy and value of natural resource conservation and the care of public land, according to the CCC Legacy website, [www.ccclegacy.org](http://www.ccclegacy.org).

The monument will be installed at the park’s main entrance, a new roundabout at 33rd St., South Av. and CCC Road. The project is funded by the Fort Missoula portion of the county-wide 2014 Parks and Trails Bond. City and county officials plan to host a monument dedication ceremony with CCC Legacy members next spring.

For more information on the CCC at Fort Missoula, see local historian Stan Cohen’s book, "The Tree Army," (Pictorial Histories: Missoula, Mt.), 2010. For more information on Fort Missoula Regional Park, visit [www.missoulaparks.org](http://www.missoulaparks.org) or phone 721-PARK.

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